THE STUDY OF THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL – BASED ON CRITERIA ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Performance appraisal has widened as a concept and as a set of practices and in the form of performance management has become part of a more strategic approach to integrating HR activities and business policies. As a result of this, the research on the subject has moved beyond the limited confines of measurement issues and accuracy of performance ratings and has begun to focus more of social and motivational aspects of appraisal. I am doing this project in order to identify and discusses a number of themes and trends that together make up the developing research agenda for this field. It breaks these down in terms of the nature of appraisal and the context in which it operates. The former is considered in terms of contemporary thinking on the content of appraisal (contextual performance, goal orientation and self awareness) and the process of appraisal (appraiser–appraisee interaction, and multi-source feedback). My discussion of the context of appraisal would concentrate on cultural differences and the impact of new technology. In reviewing these emerging areas of research, this study seeks to explore some of the implications for appraisal practice at both organizational and individual levels. Thus, the result of my survey and analysis would provide a very useful input to the management of the organization in order to give the better view for analyzing the skills as well as seniority during performance appraisal.

One of the solutions to the above said problems which I felt is PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL, which should be conducted effectively and efficiently to completely eliminate such problems.

INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal, is a method by which the job performance of an employee is evaluated in terms of quality, quantity, cost and time. Performance appraisal is a part of career development. Performance appraisals are regular reviews of employee performance within organizations.

The aims of a performance appraisal are to:

- Give feedback on performance to employees.
- Identify employee training needs.
- Document criteria used to allocate organizational rewards.
- Form a basis for personnel decisions
- Provide the opportunity for organizational diagnosis and development.
- Facilitate communication between employee and administrator
- Validate selection techniques and human resource policies to meet federal Equal Employment Opportunity requirements.

Research has reported that appraises seem to have greater acceptance of the appraisal process, and feel more satisfied with it, when the process is directly linked to rewards. Such findings are a serious challenge to those who feel that appraisal results and reward outcomes must be strictly isolated from each other.

There is also a group who argues that the evaluation of employees for reward purposes, and frank communication with them about their performance, are part of the basic responsibilities of management. The practice of not discussing reward issues while appraising performance is, say critics, based on inconsistent and muddled ideas of motivation. In many organizations, this inconsistency is aggravated by the practice of having separate wage and salary reviews, in which merit rises and bonuses are decided arbitrarily, and often secretly, by supervisors and managers.

**TYPES OF APPRAISALS**

- Numeric rating - rates 1 to 10
- Free written report - appraiser writes an account of an employee’s performance in essay style.
- Controlled written report - same as above but with a document completed.
- Personality trait report - rating initiative, reliability, and judgment
- Forced choice rating - an extension of numerical approach indicating high and low performance.
- Forced distribution - a number of categories (average, below average, above average, etc) assessed for each quality.
- Self rating - employee comments on his/her own performance and to put forward suggestions relating to modification of job description, further training and development needed.
BENEFITS OF APPRAISAL

Perhaps the most significant benefit of appraisal is that, in the rush and bustle of daily working life, it offers a rare chance for a supervisor and subordinate to have "time out" for a one-on-one discussion of important work issues that might not otherwise be addressed. Almost universally, where performance appraisal is conducted properly, both supervisors and subordinates have reported the experience as beneficial and positive.

- Motivation and Satisfaction
- Training and Development
- Recruitment and Induction
- Employee Evaluation

CONFLICT AND CONFRONTATION

Invariably the need arises in performance appraisal to provide an employee with less than flattering feedback.

The skill and sensitivity used to handle these often difficult sessions is critical. If the appraisee accepts the negative feedback and resolves to improve, all is well. But if the result is an angry or hurt employee, then the process of correction has failed. The performance of an employee in such cases is unlikely to improve and may deteriorate even further.

OVERVIEW

Performance appraisals are a systematic way of evaluating the standard of an employee’s performance.

Steps for Developing a Systematic Performance Appraisal.

1. Identify Key Performance Criteria
2. Develop Appraisal Measures
3. Collect Performance Information from Different Sources
4. Conduct an Appraisal Interview
5. Evaluate the Appraisal Process

BEST PRACTICE IN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

In essence, best practice in performance appraisals involves:
 Integrating performance appraisal into a formal goal setting system.

 Basing appraisals on accurate and current job descriptions.

 Offering adequate support and assistance to employees to improve their performance

 (e.g., professional development opportunities).

 Ensuring that appraisers have adequate knowledge and direct experience of the employee’s performance.

 Conducting appraisals on a regular basis.

 OBJECTIVES & SCOPE

 AIMS

 Performance appraisals are a way to give feedback to staff regarding their performance. The appraisal can be used to encourage good work as well as point out opportunities for improvement. Appraisals can also be used to set measurable targets and objectives to continually spur performance improvement.

 INCREASING ROLE CLARITY

 Performance appraisal is a tool for communicating the skills, knowledge and attitudes required for the different job roles. The appraisal criteria acts as a guide to the attitudes and behaviours that any company would like their staff in their various capacities to have.

 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

 Performance appraisals measure an individual’s performance and can identify opportunities for improvement or learning through training.

 COMPENSATION AND REWARD

 As any company bonuses and annual increments are linked to performance, a system for measuring performance in an equitable way is necessary. The performance appraisal encourages the use of objective, quantifiable criteria to measure performance which will be known to all staff. This system improves fair judgement and the perception of equity among staff.

 CAREER PLANNING

 Performance appraisals will allow any company to assess the skill set of their existing staff to ascertain the career path for each individual.
ENHANCE CORPORATE VALUES

Any company’s corporate value is the pursuit of innovative quality in the areas of Customers, Employees, Society, Products, Technology, Management and Fairness. These values are translated to performance measures that are used in the appraisal. This enhances awareness of corporate values and promotes behaviours that are in line with any company’s values.

Thus based on the above topics the objective of my study is “to analyze the criteria of performance appraisal and also to recommend measures to improve the same.”

This objective has been classified as follows:

- To study the performance appraisal system of a standard organization.
- To analyze the transformation of performance appraisal form traditional to modern type.
- To study the practical application of performance appraisal in that organization.
- To compare appraisal system of different organization and find out the most common parameters for appraisal.
- How can companies use performance appraisal as an effective tool to achieve organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A promotion is the appointment of a member to another position, within the same department or elsewhere in the organization, involving duties and responsibilities of a more complex or demanding nature and are recognized by a higher pay grade and salary.

A promotion is a move up the organizational ladder; job rotation and transfers are lateral moves; demotions are downward moves; and layoffs move employees out. Layoffs, in contrast to dismissals are terminations, sometimes temporary, required for business needs unrelated to worker behavior or performance. All of these changes bring about shifts in status, and often in pay, of the employees involved.

SENIORITY VS. MERIT IN PROMOTIONS

Seniority is an employee’s length of service in a position, job grouping, or farm operation. An individual who has worked on a farm for three years has more seniority than one who has worked for two. Merit, in contrast, refers to "worth" or "excellence." Merit is more difficult to measure than seniority. In the context of promotion, it relates to relevant qualifications as well as effectiveness of past performance.
PROMOTION BY SENIORITY

In a straight seniority system - where the only factor in allocating jobs is length of service - a worker would enter the organization at the lowest possible level and advance to higher positions as vacancies occur. All prospective farm supervisors and managers would work their way up through the ranks. In a seniority system, length of service is the chief criteria for moving up the ladder.

More typically, seniority counts only within specified job groups. Some groups might contain only one job classification, others several. All managers, for instance, would have once worked as foremen. The benefits and disadvantages of using seniority in promotion decisions are summarized in the following Figure. The most obvious strength is its undisputed objectivity.

Growers may deviate from a system based purely on seniority in order to avoid some of its inherent limitations. Seniority systems tend to reward loyalty and promote cooperation - albeit not excellence.

PROMOTION BY MERIT

Promotions based on merit advance workers who are best qualified for the position, rather than those with the greatest seniority. When present employees are applying for a position, a worker’s past performance is also considered. Effective performance appraisal helps build trust in the system.

SUMMARY

Organizational movements, such as promotions, transfers, job rotations, demotions, and layoffs may alter workers’ security, satisfaction and productivity. Arguments favoring merit-based promotions focus around worker qualifications and performance, while those based on seniority stress greater job security and protection from arbitrary treatment. Seniority tends to reward loyalty while merit promotes excellence. An effective blend may combine good points from each. Even workers who may favor promotions through merit often favor seniority-based layoffs that retain long-term employees. In contrast, arguments favoring merit layoffs stress the need to have qualified persons doing the work.

The most significant reasons of using Performance appraisal are:

- Making payroll and compensation decisions – 80%
- Training and development needs – 71%
- Identifying the gaps in desired and actual performance and its cause – 76%
- Deciding future goals and course of action – 42%
- Promotions, demotions and transfers – 49%
Other purposes – 6% (including job analysis and providing superior support, assistance and counseling)

**BENEFITS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

Perhaps the most significant benefit of appraisal is that, in the rush and bustle of daily working life, it offers a rare chance for a supervisor and subordinate to have "time out" for a one-on-one discussion of important work issues that might not otherwise be addressed.

Almost universally, where performance appraisal is conducted properly, both supervisors and subordinates have reported the experience as beneficial and positive.

Appraisal offers a valuable opportunity to focus on work activities and goals, to identify and correct existing problems, and to encourage better future performance. Thus the performance of the whole organization is enhanced.

For many employees, an "official" appraisal interview may be the only time they get to have exclusive, uninterrupted access to their supervisor. Said one employee of a large organization after his first formal performance appraisal, "In twenty years of work, that's the first time anyone has ever bothered to sit down and tell me how I'm doing."

The value of this intense and purposeful interaction between a supervisor and subordinate should not be underestimated.

**CHALLENGES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

In order to make a performance appraisal system effective and successful, an organization comes across various challenges and problems. The main challenges involved in the performance appraisal process are:

1. Determining the Evaluation Criteria
2. Create a Rating Instrument
3. Lack of Competence
4. Errors in Rating and Evaluation
5. Resistance

**METHODOLOGY**

How to Conduct a Performance Appraisal Process

The following five-step approaches are available for conducting a systematic performance appraisal:
1) Identify key Performance Criteria
2) Develop Appraisal Measures
3) Collect Performance Information from different sources
4) Conduct an Appraisal Interview
5) Evaluate the Appraisal Process.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY KEY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of setting up a performance appraisal is deciding what to assess. In essence, four key dimensions of performance should be considered in a performance appraisal.

   i) Base the performance criteria on an up-to-date job description
   ii) Develop criteria in consultation with appraisers and employees.

STEP 2: DEVELOP APPRAISAL MEASURES

Once clear and specific performance criteria have been developed, the next step is to decide how to assess employee’s performance. It is recommended that a structured and systematic approach is taken to assessing performance. Problems that arise when an unstructured “blank sheet” approach is used include:

There are three important considerations in the design of appraisal measures:

   i) Generic versus individually tailored measures
   ii) Objective versus subjective assessments
   iii) Assessing the impact of the work environment on performance.

STEP 3: COLLECT PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES

Once the appraisal measures are developed, the next step involves collection of accurate performance information. A common trap is to begin noting observations of employees just before conducting appraisals. This is likely to give an inaccurate picture of a employee’s performance. Ideally, employee’s performance should be observed in a systematic way over time (e.g., in a diary). This method ensures the accuracy of information about their performances.

STEP 4: CONDUCT AN APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

The next step in a performance appraisal is to conduct the appraisal interview. The two central purposes of the appraisal interview are to:
Reflect on past performance to identify major achievements, areas that require further development, and barriers / facilitators to effective performance

- Identify goals and strategies for future work practice.

STEP 5: EVALUATE THE APPRAISAL PROCESS

As with any organisational system, the performance appraisal process should undergo regular review and improvement. For example, the process of performance appraisal could be evaluated by conducting focus groups or surveys with employees to gauge their satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS PROJECT

The research design comprise of the plan and structure of investigation conceived so as to arrive at the responses to the research queries. It there by addresses the aims and objectives of the study, both descriptively and analytically.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sampling technique adopted for the study is non-probability Random sampling technique according to the convenience of the researcher. A questionnaire was administered to HR managers / executives of different software companies to obtain data for the purpose of analysis.

SAMPLE SIZE

Data is collected using a sample size of 30 employees at each Level (Top, Supervisory, and Officers Levels).

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

The sample mainly consists of data from the primary sources that are utilized for the purpose of this study. This is done by means of administrating questioners to Top Level Managers / Supervisory Level and Officers Level executives of the Company. Secondary data like company journals, newsletters, records etc. were also relied on for retrieving further information.

PRIMARY DATA

For obtaining the primary data of my project, I have used two research instruments i.e. Questionnaire and Structured interview:

QUESTIONNAIRE TARGETED TO

- Top Level - Structured Method.
- Supervisory Level - Structured and Operational Method.
- Officers Level - Operational Method
SECONDARY DATA

I have obtained secondary data from

- Previous in house studies done in that organization.
- Earlier Appraisal Report / Past Employees/ Grievance

INSTRUMENTATION TECHNIQUE

Questionnaire and Structured Disguised Questions.

QUESTIONNAIRE

There were two questionnaire were designed. First has been designed to assess the job satisfaction level and morale of the employees in the organization. Second was designed for the HR of the organizations.

CHAPTER 4

DATA COLLECTION

ACTUAL COLLECTION OF DATA

Both secondary and primary sources of data are utilized for the purpose of this study. Primary data is collected by means of administering a questionnaire to the Employees Human Resource Managers / Executives of the organization. Secondary data is collected from various records, manuals and other sources of the HR Department.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

- To get contacts of HR Mangers for interviews was difficult.
- Getting the views and opinion of the interviewee (HR Manager) was a difficult task.
- Time constraint is also one of the limitations, because of the busy schedule of some employees data has not been collected from those employees.
- Few people failed to give exact information for the first particular 6 questions as they have to give ratings for superiors and subordinates.

ERRORS OCCURRED IN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

One of the biggest problems with performance appraisal is the fact that most people are not accurate raters of others’ performance. When an employee’s performance rating does not reflect their true or actual performance, we say a rater error has occurred. Whilst completing the appraisal form, the appraiser is advised to exercise caution, as there may be several pitfalls which may skew the assessment:
THE MOST COMMON RATER ERRORS ARE

- Halo/Horn Effect
- Central Tendency
- Regency Effect
- Rater Bias
- Negative Effect

USING THE APPRAISAL FORM

ELEMENTS OF THE APPRAISAL FORM

The appraisal form covers the following key areas:

- Assessment of Performance
- Employee’s Growth and Development - Strengths and Areas for Improvement
- Training requirements
- Achievements
- Goals and Targets (for Managers and Executives)
- Review with Staff (for Managers and Executives)
- Recommendations
- Management Review- Review by Countersigning Authority

DATA ANALYSIS

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

SPSS and Rank Correlation had been used for data analysis and interpretation.

**SPSS:** Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is a computer program used for statistical analysis. SPSS has become a leader in predictive analytics technologies through a combination of commitment to innovation and dedication to customers. SPSS is now virtually used every industry, including telecommunications, banking, finance, insurance, healthcare, manufacturing, retail, consumer packaged goods, higher education, government, and market research. The many features of SPSS are accessible via pull-down menus or can be programmed with a proprietary 4GL command syntax language. Command syntax programming has the benefits of reproducibility; simplifying repetitive tasks; and handling complex data.
manipulations and analyses. Additionally, some complex applications can only be programmed in syntax and is not accessible through the menu structure. The pull-down menu interface also generates command syntax, this can be displayed in the output though the default settings have to be changed to make the syntax visible to the user; or can be paste into a syntax file using the "paste" button present in each menu.

Source… http://www.answers.com/topic/spss

**RANK CORRELATION:** A nonparametric test of statistical dependence for a random sample of paired observations. A rank correlation coefficient measures the correspondence between two rankings and assesses its significance. Suppose that it is possible to arrange a number of individuals according to the degree to which they possess a given character, whether qualitative or quantitative. Thus, for example, a number of operators may be arranged in order of efficiency by their supervisor, although it may not be easy to offer any satisfactory measure of efficiency. Similarly, a number of students may be arranged in order of stature without measuring the height of each student. Such an ordered arrangement of individuals is called a ranking, and the ordinal number indicating the position of a given individual in the ranking is called its rank. To be specific, a rank r means that, with respect to the character under study, the individual stands rth, so that (r-1) individuals have the character to a higher degree than this individual. In a given ranking, two or more individuals may be considered indistinguishable with respect to the character under study and so may be assigned the same rank. The ranking is then said to involve a tie.

Rank correlation has three possible uses. First, it may be used to find the degree of association between two series of data that are given as ranks, such as the standings of a group of students in two different examinations. Second, rank correlation enables us to correlate two qualitative characters that are amenable to ranking, such as eye-color and hair-color (for a group of people) or toughness of language and toughness of subject matter (for a group of books). Third, it may be used to measure the agreement between the ranks assigned by two judges to the same set of individuals with respect to the same (qualitative or quantitative) character. Fourth, it serves as an alternative to ordinary correlation when the data are observations on two quantitative characters. When the number of individuals is small, rank correlation is a quick and easy measure of association, which may be useful in case of intensive study is called for.

Source… Goon, Gupta, Dasgupta – Basic Statistics

**FINDINGS**

A. From the survey results its evident that both the appraisee’s and appraisers expectation from Performance appraisal system are the same i.e. “Determination of Promotion or Transfer” and “Salary Administration and Benefits”. Hence a single performance appraisal system can satisfy needs of both the Appraiser and appraisee. Therefore the Performance appraisal program would be designed in such a way that the appraiser would be able to analyse the contribution of the employee to the organisation periodically and all the employees who have been performing well would be rewarded suitably either by an increase in the salary or a promotion. Through this the appraiser can also motivate the
employees who felt that they had no growth in the organisation and serves the purpose of employee development. Thus performance appraisals can be used as a significant tool for career planning.

B. Analyzing one's own strengths and weaknesses is the best way of identifying the potentials available, rather than the other person telling. Self-appraisal is a tool to analyze oneself. One of the most important findings was that almost all the employees wanted self-rating to be a part of performance appraisal program carried out by the organisation. From the responses of the appraiser we can also see that Self rating is not encouraged by the organisations. This could therefore be an important factor which leads to dissatisfaction among the appraisees. At the end of the year of the appraisal period the appraisal process should begin with self-appraisal by every employee. To appraise one's own self on key performing targets and qualities, the appraise would go through a process of reflection and review. It is an established fact that change is faster when it is self initiated. If any employee has to improve or do better, he must first feel the need to do so. Reflection and review is a process that enables him to feel the need and improve more upon his strengths and weaknesses.

C. Another point to be noticed is that even in the other forms of Performance Appraisal also the employees expect that they should be given a chance to rate their own performance. This can allow the employee to analyze one's own performance which gives new insights on how one is performing and what are the critical points where he has to put his best and improve upon.

D. The existence of a proper complain channel was also of utmost importance to the appraisees. They should be given a chance to convey their grievances to the top management.

E. The findings suggest that for success of Appraisal system the credibility of appraiser is of utmost importance.

F. As per the Appraiser, a poorly conducted appraisal system would lead to demotivation and ineffective teamwork which will result in inefficient functioning and low productivity in the organization. Therefore, if at all they feel there is dissatisfaction among the appraisee’s they should motivate them. Achievement, recognition, involvement, job satisfaction and development can motivate the employees to a large extent. Along with this satisfactory working conditions and appropriate awards also play an important role.

G. Also a majority of employees were satisfied with the current appraisal system although they requested for some changes.

H. From the survey we can also derive that the appraisee’s expect a post appraisal interview to be conducted wherein they are given a proper feedback on their performance and they can also put forward their complaints if any. The appraisal should also be followed up with a session of counseling which is often neglected in many organizations. Counseling involves helping an employee to identify his strengths and weaknesses to contribute to
his growth and development. Purpose is to help an employee improve his performance level, maintain his morale, guide him to identify and develop his strong points, overcome his weak points, develop new capabilities to handle more responsibilities, identify his training needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With rewards being directly linked to achievement of objectives, goal setting and Performance Appraisal assumes utmost importance. The Performance Appraisal System has been professionally designed and it is monitored by HRD. The implementation is the responsibility of each and every employee along with their supervisor. There should be adequate training to the evaluator that will go a long way in answering the quality of Performance Appraisal. In conclusion, a Performance Appraisal is a very important tool used to influence employees. A formal Performance review is important as it gives an opportunity to get an overall view of job performance and staff development. It encourages systematic and regular joint-stockling and planning for the future. Good performance reviews therefore don’t just summarize the past they help determine future performance.

During the study, distribution of the questionnaire and conducting of personal interviews did help to arrive at the standards of appraisal system adopted by the organization.

Appraisal systems are a very effective means to realize the growth of a company and its employees. Hence, it is considered to be important for the development of the industry. From the appraisal systems, the 360º are the most preferred by a majority of them.

CONCLUSION

With rewards being directly linked to achievement of objectives, goal setting and Performance Appraisal assumes utmost importance. The Performance Appraisal System has been professionally designed and it is monitored by HRD. The implementation is the responsibility of each and every employee along with their supervisor. There should be adequate training to the evaluator that will go a long way in answering the quality of Performance Appraisal. In conclusion, a Performance Appraisal is a very important tool used to influence employees. A formal Performance review is important as it gives an opportunity to get an overall view of job performance and staff development. It encourages systematic and regular joint-stockling and planning for the future. Good performance reviews therefore don’t just summarize the past they help determine future performance.

1. Performance appraisal should not be perceived just as a regular activity but its importance should be recognized and communicated down the line to all the employees.

2. There should be a review of job analysis, job design and work environment based on the performance appraisal.

3. It should bring more clarity to the goal and vision of the organization.
4. It should provide more empowerment to the employees.

5. New methods of appraisal should be adopted so that both appraiser and the appraisee take interest in the appraisal process.

6. The employees who have excellent performance should be used as a mentor for other employees which would motivate others to perform better.

7. Employees should be given feedback regarding their appraisal. This will help them to improve on their weak areas.

8. The awareness sessions for the employees/appraisees should be made more interactive and the views and opinion of the appraisees regarding appraisal should be given due consideration.

9. Assistance should be sought from specialists for framing a proper appraisal system that suits the organisation climate. Constant monitoring of the appraisal system should be done through discussions, suggestions, interactions.

10. Combining the different methods of appraisal can minimize the element of biasness in an appraisal. Like the Rating method combined with assessment center method would give an evidence of poor/unfavorable or outstanding behaviour of the appraisee, if any.

11. Use of modern appraisal techniques like 360° appraisal, assessment centers which are more effective.

12. More transparency should be brought about in the appraisal system.

13. Information regarding the performance of the employees should be kept in proper manner.

14. Performance appraisal should be effectively link to the performance management system of the organization.

15. Performance appraisal takes into account the past performance of the employees and focuses on the improvement of the future performance of the employees.

Thus Performance management lays an evaluative and developmental dimension to its makeup, and is crucial in both linking rewards to performance and providing a platform for the development of employees. Over concentration on the assessment of performance can work to the detriment of effort aimed at establishing the development needs of the individual in an open and honest way. The manager, as an appraiser, may encounter difficulties in reconciling the roles of 'judge' and 'mentor'. Managers need to develop the skills of coping with such tensions in their roles. In some organizations, this problem is solved by having different managers carrying out performance and development appraisals. Appraisal provides the context in which managers can seek to ensure that there is acceptable congruency between the objectives of the individual and those of the organization.
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