



MAPA Consulting - Management and Performance Associates – December 2005 Performance Reflections

Kwanzaa, Hanukkah or Christmas--Most of us seem to enjoy being with family and friends and having a good time during the Holidays. People take a few days off, whether to travel or stay at home. This is also a good time to reflect upon 2005 performances: your company's performance, your own, and for those of you who are leaders of others, time to assess your staff's performance.

Most people managers dread a performance appraisal session. Why is that? Could it be that the majority are just unprepared for it? Regardless of the reasons, nearly all companies require it be done. Also, good management practice requires that you give constant feedback to your staff. So.....get prepared, get your performance data, your observations, your notes, summaries of previous coaching sessions, mid-year reviews, third party feedback and summarize it all in a performance appraisal.

I know that some of you (if not all of you....) are asking yourselves: "Why haven't I done all these good things during the year? Is it too late?"

Well, yes. It is too late to do the things you were supposed to have done during the year, but not too late to start collecting data. A good appraisal is based on data, and only on data. That means that all of your perceptions and prejudices have to be set aside.

Prejudices? What are you talking about? I have no prejudices, some of you will say.

Well, we – human beings – all have our prejudices, or to use a more neutral word, we all have our preferences. Some managers are focused more on how tasks and results were accomplished rather than on the results themselves. Does it matter? The simple answer is "no, it does not matter at all, providing that the manner in which the result was accomplished was in line with corporate values and complied with all regulations."

But it is not too late to learn from the pain and do something different next year. Another tradition this time of the year is making New Year's resolutions. Some of us will go on a diet, stop smoking, exercise three to

four times a week and so on. What about your professional resolutions? In case you can't think of any ideas, please allow us to suggest a few. Remember, you don't have to take them all, just a few of them if consistently applied, will ensure an easier management of the performance cycle, not to mention development and more satisfaction for your staff. Our suggestions for 2006 are:

- 1) Start planning early.** As soon as you go back to the office, sit down with your staff members and start planning this year's performance.
- 2) In a staff meeting, present the latest company's initiatives and strategies.** Focus on results the company is looking for.
- 3) Individually, discuss with your staff members how they can contribute to the company's goals.**
- 4) Do not concentrate only on numbers.** Take advantage of your one on one's and focus on your expectations of behavioral change.
- 5) The individual meetings have a third dimension as well: careers.** What are they looking for in the short, medium and long term?
- 6) Offer constant feedback during the year.** Reinforce what they are doing well, and discuss where they need to improve.
- 7) Open a binder for everyone and start collecting performance data.**

See you next time. We welcome your feedback.

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