

# So How Am I Doing?

By Paul Wuebold

Supervisors are often asked to perform a multitude of evaluation tasks from operations management to equipment operation and replacement to assigned personnel performance. Each one of these evaluations is critical in keeping the team and the mission focused and goal oriented.

## THE HUMAN FACTOR

An entire campus is depending on sound decisions based on experience, analytical data, and customer/employee comments. Even minor distractions and unforeseen circumstances can have rippling effects creating larger problems downstream. It is quite easy to get tunnel vision on these challenges as the frequency and importance of the decision become more prevalent, creating opportunities to overlook the obvious at times. It is the evaluation of our employees that is arguably the most critical component of the assessment; we deal with human emotions, pride, image, and promotion opportunities.

Supervisors generally are required to evaluate those assigned under them annually so that individual performance can be measured and communicated to provide opportunities for improvement and recognition of accomplishments.

Each institution has a standard form with which to document performance. The form is the foundation to help us verbally communicate to the employee. This two-way communication offers a shared discussion where words and actions can be clarified. It is more than a snapshot in time, but a culmination of a year's performance showing trends.

## A TWO-WAY STREET

Supervisors only receive feedback from the top down, but what about from the bottom up? It can be unnerving and maybe even frightening to ask those whom you evaluate to evaluate you. Sometimes supervisors think they are hitting all the right marks when they are missing more than they are hitting. Leadership styles like Gen. George "Old Blood and Guts" Patton are thankfully from a bygone era and quite honestly have no place in today's educational environment.

Organizations can only be successful if vision is communicated and understood so that those executing the vision can directly contribute to the successful outcome of established goals. The feedback offered by employees can also miss the target. Only fair, unbiased, constructive comments are effective in providing honest evaluations. Anything less would minimize the importance and impact of the assessment. The feedback allows the employee to articulate expectations and performance measures of their supervisors which should generate a more productive work climate and teamwork.

## HONEST FEEDBACK

The key to successful evaluations is the focus on job performance. In many cases, supervisors will be able to weed out the over glorious comments from "shop favorites" and the severely disgruntled comments from those looking for "payback." It is the middle part of the survey numbers that provide the most honest and usable feedback. Those comments will have the most impact on performance measurement and any course corrections

necessary to improve teamwork, shop climate and mission accomplishment. Everyone appreciates feedback more than a checked box, so written comments and cited examples are extremely important in validating the checked box.

## TRUST

Employees need to know that their opinion means something and the time they took to complete the survey is valued. Their voice holds weight and has the potential to create strong and consistent collaborative success and commitment. To ensure honest feedback, demonstrated anonymity must be present. False or misrepresented information, or no information, would likely be the outcome where the employees feel their supervisor would know who wrote specific comments allowing the possibility for retaliation or retribution. It is vital that the trust is never questioned.

As professionals, we all want to know how we are doing. We all have the responsibility for doing the right thing for our teams. Our employees need and want honest feedback on annual performances. Supervisors should have the same expectations.

You can find the sample Employee Feedback Form on the facing page, or on the Professional Affairs page on the APPA website. <http://www.appa.org/committees/professionalaffairs>. 

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# Facilities and Grounds Operations Employee Feedback Survey

Please indicate how well the following statements apply to your immediate boss/supervisor:

STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>					
Clearly communicates workplace objectives					
Takes time to listen to me					
Clearly communicates workplace changes or decisions					
Clearly communicates direction for my organization					
I am able to contact Senior Leadership as needed					
I can access the information I need to do my job					
Communicates things that affect me and my job					
<b>MY JOB</b>					
Recognizes good work					
My workload is reasonable					
Knows how my job impacts the department mission					
My supervisor focuses on fixing the problem rather than finding someone to blame					
My supervisor involves me in solving problems that we face					
<b>CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</b>					
I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things					
My workgroup looks for ways to improve productivity					
My supervisor is committed to excellence in order to increase customer satisfaction					
I am expected to find better ways to get the job done					
My supervisor expects me to find the root cause of the problem instead of only a temporary solution					
<b>TEAMWORK</b>					
My co-workers and I work well together to accomplish our departments goals					
My supervisor encourages teamwork to accomplish daily objectives					
The people that I work with cooperate to get the work done					
<b>TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT</b>					
I receive the training I need to do my job well					
My performance reviews are fair					
I have the training and support to do a good job					
I feel encouraged to learn new things that will help me do a better job					