The Janus
Performance Management System
Volume I

A complete performance management support process for individuals, teams, and the entire organization

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Janus, the ancient Roman god with two faces, was originally considered to be the benevolent creator and god of gods. He later came to represent change and transition, such as the progression of past to future or one vision or condition to another.

January, the first month in the Roman calendar, comes from the word *janua*, meaning “gate.” It was sacred to Janus, as was the first day of every month. The Romans believed that Janus presided over every start, every journey, and every completion. With his two faces, he was able to see the internal world as well as the external world; he watched entrances as well as exits, and was able to see left as well as right, above as well as below, for as well as against, before as well as after.

Appraisal and performance management systems also look at change and transition. They examine how far we have come and where we are going, helping us measure performance against goals and then map a plan for achievement of future goals. A performance management system is generally a year-long, formal, systematic process involving reviews, projections, and constant adjustments in order to maximize our chances of success.

Janus was chosen as the ideal symbol for this performance management system because it, also, is about looking back and looking forward.
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*The Performance Development Discussion: Guidelines and Action Plan*

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*Prior to the Performance Development Discussion: The Employee’s Booklet*

*The Performance Progress Update Discussion: Manager and Employee Booklet*

*Career Planning and Development: Manager and Employee Action Planning Booklet*
Preface

The Janus Performance Management System was created to help organizations make sure that their individuals and teams are focused and provided with the help they need to achieve personal and organizational goals and objectives. It was developed over a two-year period of research, planning, and writing by a team of four authors committed to creating a comprehensive and best-practices system composed of performance-management information, resources, tools, and general guidance. This complete system is available in one easily accessible package.

The product you hold in your hands is a fully integrated suite designed to help organizations, teams, or individuals set effective performance goals and develop competency standards, and then use them to appraise progress and performance against those goals or standards at specific points along the way, up to and at the close of the annual review cycle. The entire system is paper- and electronic-based, with available software and Internet options.

The Janus System is based on a comprehensive step-by-step approach; the notes, coaching guides, forms, and other tools are progressively organized in three binder packages. The Janus Internet System is designed to help individuals and team leaders manage the entire process through use of such helpful tools as the competency-based questionnaire profiles for self, 180-degree feedback, and 360-degree feedback.
The Janus Performance Management System

The Janus Performance Management System is organized into three major and integrated volumes:

Volume I: Managing Performance
Volume I of the Janus Performance Management System is organized into seven integrated modules, beginning with a navigational guide to the process. The modules explain how users can tailor the system to individual needs by developing specific competencies most relevant to a particular job role, and illustrate how to use the assessment questionnaire, tools, discussion guidelines, and competency information booklets that are important components of the Janus System. An appendix at the end of Volume I contains preparation and planning tools for the performance discussions.

The seven modules in Volume I are:

- **Module 1**: Introduction to the Janus Performance Management System
- **Module 2**: Taking the Performance Initiative
- **Module 3**: Setting Performance Objectives
- **Module 4**: Giving and Receiving Performance Feedback
- **Module 5**: Coaching for Performance Excellence
- **Module 6**: Conducting a Performance Update Discussion
- **Module 7**: Handling Unacceptable Performance

Volume II: Planning for Long-Term Performance Improvement
Performance management systems focus on two major goals:

1. To help individuals achieve their specific objectives in order to be successful in their organizational role.
2. To help individuals develop their skills and abilities at a professional and/or personal level. This goal involves long-term as well as short-term development—perhaps even over an individual’s entire career with the organization.

Janus is a comprehensive step-by-step planning design system that can help you effectively manage this longer-term process. It includes a suite of reproducible goal-setting and appraisal forms and other tools for action planning, so that all your written documents will be comprehensive, written in plain and consistent language, and easy to use.

The three modules in Volume II are:

- **Module 8**: Conducting an End-of-Cycle Performance Appraisal
- **Module 9**: Career Planning and Professional Development
- **Module 10**: Performance Action Planning
Volume III: The Janus Competency System

The entire Janus Performance Management System is based on a core set of thirty-six competencies that apply to success in every job role. Managers and individuals using the system review all thirty-six competencies and select as many as ten that are most critical to a particular job role. The chosen set of competencies will constitute a personalized performance management system, complete with questionnaire, on which to base the management process. Volume III also contains a guide to the Janus competency system and 216 coaching tips (six per competency). There is only one module:

Module 11: Performance Competencies

THE IMPORTANCE OF USING A COMPETENCY-BASED SYSTEM

Volume 3 is a critical part of this Janus System. Competencies usually include only those behaviors that demonstrate effective or superior performance. They do not include specific knowledge, but rather “learned” or practical experience or the behavioral application of knowledge that produces a successful result. Competencies refer to the application of skills that produces a successful result. The diagram below illustrates what we mean.

```
Skills

Knowledge/Experience

Competencies

Motives/Attitudes/Styles
```

The model is important because it provides a guide to the range of behaviors that produce excellent performance.

- An organization can use it to “raise the bar” of performance expectations.
- Individuals and teams can align their behavior with key organizational strategies.
- Each individual can use it to understand what they need to do to achieve their goals and help achieve the goals of the organization as a whole.
Navigating the Janus
Performance Management System

For supervisors and managers: The Janus System will help you manage staff and team performance and deliver good results.

For individuals: The Janus System can help you appraise and manage your own performance.

IMPORTANT FEATURES

Comprehensive: The Janus System is comprehensive, covering every stage of the performance management process.

User-friendly: The system is organized into manageable “chunks” or modules so you can go through the process step-by-step as needed. Each of the three volumes or parts can be used as stand-alones, but you will be able to easily refer back to what has been previously covered or accomplished.

Easily used for reference: Each volume can be made available to members of a team who need to look up specific information, review the competency library, locate a useful form or checklist, or obtain background information on a specific topic.

Available in hard-copy or in electronic form: The entire documentation set is also available over the Internet: Just use the navigation sidebar to find a relevant section or module. The Internet-based system, fully searchable, contains a wide range of articles on the subject of performance management, with new and interesting articles added to the site every month.

Whether individuals use the three hard-copy volumes or the Internet-based material, The Janus Performance Management System will provide the information and tools needed to improve performance, and help make performance-based development a mutually rewarding experience for all involved.
Appraising and managing organizational performance is one of the most powerful feedback and communication strategies available to any enterprise. The Janus Performance Management System is a fully integrated, step-by-step approach that addresses all the concerns managers have about appraising and managing the performance of individuals or teams. This first module acts as a guide to the system and its components.
Module One
Introduction to the Janus Performance Management System

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Module One
Introduction to the Janus Performance Management System

1.1 Introduction to Positive and Constructive Performance Appraisal
Many organizations under-use their performance management or appraisal systems (if they have one at all). They become so focused on completing forms and reports that they lose sight of the real purpose behind the system. Supervisors and managers are also reluctant to judge individuals, especially if there is going to be strong disagreement. It’s often easier to avoid the real issues and simply go through the motions or follow the procedure at a minimal level.

The designers of the Janus Performance Management System recognize the problems managers and supervisors have with appraisal systems, and have built into the system ways to eliminate or minimize problems that can occur. The Janus Performance Management System focuses on two things:

1. Setting clear and effective goals.
2. Identifying key competencies for each job role.

The Janus System is based on the belief that performance appraisals are most productive when:

- They are truly collaborative.
- Both people involved in the process prepare ahead of time.
- There have been several feedback discussions on performance throughout the year.
- The end-of-cycle discussions are focused on growth and development.

Of course, the employee is a major contributor to the appraisal process, right from the outset: Every individual gets involved at the beginning of the process by setting goals and objectives that are realistic. Any goals that are designed to stretch the employee need to be fully agreed to by the employee and supervisor/manager. The most important competencies required to perform the job are then jointly identified by the employee and his/her supervisor. The progressive and end-of-cycle review will be based on these key competencies, as shown in diagrammatic form on the next page.
1.2 The Continuous Cycle of Performance and Development (diagram)

**Individual performance goals, objectives, and competencies are identified**
- Develop and agree on performance objectives.
- Agree on applicable competencies.

**Performance Updates (quarterly)**
- Analyze performance.
- Provide feedback.
- Coach for performance excellence.
- Update performance objectives.
- Take corrective action as necessary.

**End-of-cycle Summary Discussion of Performance and Development**
- Determine the overall performance rating.
- Discuss overall performance results, developmental progress, and competencies/management practices.
- Complete the development plan and discuss future career/development options.
1.3 Overview of the Key Phases of the Performance Management System

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND COMPETENCIES

Setting goals and objectives or developing individual accountabilities for the year ahead is perhaps the most critical phase of all in the overall performance-management process: If certainty, focus, and clarity are created at the beginning of the appraisal period, there will be less confusion or argument at the end. Goal-setting typically consists of two major components:

- Setting task or project objectives (special outcomes that need to be achieved above and beyond an individual’s normal job description).
- Setting skill, behavior, or development goals that help an individual to grow, broaden, gain new knowledge, and enhance their future career prospects (this involves agreeing on the most appropriate competencies to apply).

PERFORMANCE UPDATES

The employee and their supervisor/manager need to schedule a Performance Update discussion at regular intervals—perhaps every 3–4 months. Each individual within the system should formally update their supervisor/manager on their progress regarding target goals agreed to at the start of the year.

This Performance Update discussion should ideally focus on:

- The initiatives the individual has taken to meet the goals and targets.
- Agreement between the supervisor/manager and the employee on the areas of focus for the upcoming period.

This is a coaching-oriented Performance Update discussion. As such, it is a critical that the supervisor/manager:

- Recognize the individual’s contributions and encourage even better results.
- Intervene and give constructive feedback when results are below expectations, keeping people on track.
- Make appropriate changes, additions, or deletions to the original goals and targets, based on the current business climate or other conditions.
END-OF-CYCLE SUMMARY DISCUSSION OF PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT (APPRAISAL)

This is the part of the process in which each appraisee’s accomplishments during the business year or entire performance cycle are summarized. In the Janus System, the employee conducts a self-assessment of their performance, noting any and all achievements. He/she then submits the self-assessment to their supervisor/manager, who adds his or her own observations.

The individual appraisee ideally uses the Janus on-line assessment system to rate their own improvement in each of the competency areas selected at the beginning of the cycle.

The individual appraisee can also use the 180- or 360-degree feedback process, which will provide the perspective of the employee’s peers, colleagues, and subordinates, as well as the perspective of their manager/supervisor.

This will provide important information for the face-to-face discussion with the employee’s supervisor/manager. This discussion would ideally cover development plans for the employee and their career aspirations, and focus in specific terms on the year ahead.

Identifying goals and objectives, reviewing performance each quarter, and conducting an end-of-cycle discussion on performance and development constitute the three “formal” phases of the performance management cycle, but in a truly effective system, informal discussions between managers/supervisors and appraisees will be held on a regular basis for two-way feedback and to set-up any necessary coaching to help enhance performance. The Janus System provides extensive support documentation for the formal and informal aspects of the process, which can be used to chart and report on progress.
1.4 What do we mean by “performance appraisal”?

Management textbooks vary in how they define “performance appraisal.” Let’s look at a dictionary definition. **Performance** is defined as “the way in which someone or something functions.” “Appraise” comes from the Latin word *pretiare*, meaning *to value*. Hence, **appraisal** is a process in which we evaluate, judge, or estimate.

**Performance appraisal, then, is the process of evaluating or judging the way in which someone is functioning.**

When we speak of appraisal, our focus is on processes that judge *individual* performance—not the performance of an organization or a business unit.

Appraisals vary widely in form, but as conventionally practiced, they nearly always contain the five distinguishing features we summarize below. If a process is missing some of these features, we would not view it as part of a system, but rather as some other type of communication, personal development, or organizational tool.

If the following features are present in a single process or tool, it is part of a performance appraisal system:

1. **Employees’ individual work performance, behaviors, or traits are rated, judged, and/or described by someone other than the employee.** In many organizations, feedback is given by persons other than the immediate supervisor (e.g., co-workers, subordinates, internal or external customers, suppliers, or professional raters). If the supervisor is not one of the raters, the process can still be a form of appraisal; however, if the employee is the sole judge of his or her performance, the assessment would be a developmental tool, rather than a performance appraisal.

2. **Such ratings, judgments, and descriptions relate to a specific time period (e.g., a year, a calendar quarter), rather than a particular work product or project.** A salesperson might be evaluated after each sales call by their supervisor under the Janus System, but feedback about a work product, project, or task will not be a focus of Janus.

3. **The process is systematically applied to all employees or a class of employees.** Sometimes people are selectively evaluated because they are performing poorly or they are asking for special help. A systematic appraisal process will apply the same standards to many individuals.

4. **The process involves formal discussion of the relative success in completing tasks, making progress on project goals, and developing personal skills or behaviors.** These can all be discussed separately, but they are usually covered in one session as part of a performance appraisal discussion.

5. **The process results in a documented record of the performance appraisal discussion.** This is done at least annually, but can also be done quarterly. Many individual performance events or targets are recorded in writing, but documentation for a full performance appraisal is more comprehensive.
The Janus Performance Management System meets all of the above criteria. If used properly, it constitutes a full and comprehensive appraisal process.

Note: The Janus System is concerned fundamentally with employee development. Any performance differentiation between employees or between groups of people (such as differentiation regarding benefits or pay or promotional opportunities) is left to the individual organization to handle separately, where it wishes to do so.
1.5 How is the Janus Performance Management System different from other systems?

An effective performance management system does the following:

- It helps the organization meet its objectives and carry out specific initiatives.
- It helps individuals identify the ways in which they can contribute to their work group.
- It provides each individual with a clear picture of what results are expected and how they should be achieved.
- It extends the system beyond an annual appraisal to an ongoing, week-by-week or month-by-month process.

The hrdpess.profiles-r-us.com Web site contains a wide array of on-line assessment tools to help people develop their skills and competencies at an individual level, usually independently of any performance management system in which the individual is likely to be participating. These processes are closed architecture assessments: They offer fixed models in which individuals cannot customize or change the structure or the content of the particular assessment, and are useful for 180-degree and 360-degree feedback, as well as for self-assessment.

The Janus System is different from other performance management programs in two major ways. Firstly, it integrates performance with development, particularly through the use of 180- and 360-degree feedback processes. Secondly, it is an open architecture system: It allows individuals to customize the assessment and include competencies that are important for the job role and particular goals. This important feature is explained in detail in Volume III.

This integration of performance and development is shown in the diagram that follows. As the illustration shows, a well-designed, customized multi-rater assessment process is a critical cornerstone of performance and development for the whole enterprise: Individuals are given critical feedback from the people whom they most respect (their supervisor, and colleagues of their choosing). This feedback provides information regarding how well they are currently performing, as well as how they can improve and develop themselves.

The Janus System is extremely easy for the individual appraisee and the appraiser to modify, making it a complete solution to performance development that can be used and re-used as often as necessary.
1.6 The Integration of Performance and Development (diagram)

DEVELOPMENT

- Customized “Open Architecture”
- 180° Feedback
- 360° Feedback
- Assess Behaviors/Skills/Competencies
- Target Strengths and Development Opportunities
- Build Intelligent Action Plans
- Support Supervisory Coaching Roles
- Assist Career Development
- Quality Assessment
- Feedback from: Self, Internal Customers, External Customers, Teams, Project Assignments, Clients, Others
- Internal and External Customer Service
- Aggregate Training and Development Needs
- Measure Effectiveness of Training and Development
- Sustain Organization Culture Change
- Align Behavior with Strategies and Values

PERFORMANCE

- Performance Appraisal
  - How am I doing?
- Performance Management
  - How do I improve performance?
- Performance Development
- Performance Coaching
- Continuous Improvement

Compensation
- Merit
- Incentives
- Competencies
- Skills
- Team
- Gainsharing

Intelligent Decision Systems
- Reengineering
- Reorganizing
- Succession Planning
- Placement
- Retention
- Selection

Adapted from: 360° Feedback, Mark Edwards and Ann Ewen, AMACOM, 1996.
1.7 How the Janus System Works

For all of its breadth and detail, the Janus Performance Management System is essentially a simple process that can be used by appraisers and individuals.

In essence, the system is comprised of three major parts:

1. **An extensive set of performance management notes organized into eleven separate modules that can be used separately or in combination.** Each module contains a wealth of data on how an effective appraisal process can be conducted between managers/supervisors and their employees. Information is provided on: how to set effective goals and objectives; how to conduct regular reviews of performance; how to give and receive feedback; how to coach; how to take corrective action when necessary; how to create an action plan; and finally, how to conduct an end-of-cycle appraisal discussion and a thorough “forward” career-planning discussion. This information is available in modules within this documentation set in paper-based form, and is available electronically via the Janus link on the hrdpress.profiles-r-us.com Web site.

2. **Sample evaluations to help managers learn how to write a good performance appraisal, based on years of practical experience with the process.** The sample appraisals represent an extensive range of job categories, including skilled and semi-skilled workers, engineers and other technical workers, trainers and HR-professionals, and managers. A list of performance indicators is included for each category, as well as sample reviews in several different formats for top-level performers, good performers, and poor performers. They can be used as-is or modified to fit the particular circumstance or job role.

3. **A complete competency-based performance-diagnosis system to help structure individual development (both personally and professionally).** This system uses 36 broadly based competencies from which individuals and their supervisors/managers choose the ones that are most relevant and critical to future job performance. (A minimum of three and a maximum of ten competencies can be chosen.) Each of the competencies is clearly defined and is accompanied by a set of six questions that help to rate whether or not individuals demonstrate this competency. The system also contains extensive coaching notes on each competency and the individual questions, followed by suggestions for general development/improvement. The entire generic competency-based system is described in written form in the final binder of the Janus paper-based package and can be viewed electronically via the Janus link on the hrdpress.profiles-r-us.com Web site.

These three major parts of the Janus System together provide appraisees and their supervisors/managers with a well-developed and integrated Internet-based system to help them tailor or customize competency-based goals and objectives. Individuals can use the tailored questionnaire that is automatically generated to rate themselves as often as they like, seek feedback from the supervisor (as a 180-degree feedback process), or even initiate a full 360-degree feedback profile where up to ten colleagues are asked to give them feedback on their performance. The feedback will be automatically aggregated and shown alongside feedback data gathered from the individual’s own assessment and the views of their supervisor/manager.
Each tailored questionnaire will generate an extensive output report on the individual. This report will include graphs of average scores, competency-based scoring graphs for individual questions, interpretive notes, charts on strength and development needs, coaching notes, and an outline for a development plan. All this information provides an ideal way for individuals to prepare themselves before a progressive or end-of-cycle appraisal discussion, and even to openly share their results with trusted colleagues if they choose to do so. In addition, individuals can ask for comments for each selected competency from their supervisor/manager alone, or from all colleagues who complete the questionnaire as part of a full 360-degree exercise.

The anecdotal-comments feature of the Janus System is a great way to not only collect feedback (protecting individual confidentiality at the same time), but to also look at behaviors or areas of performance that have not previously been considered. However, the Janus System’s output reports provide rich data without such anecdotal comments. Individuals should consider using and reviewing standard reports first, before venturing into this extended use of the process.

The output report summary generated by the tailored questionnaire within Janus is shown on the next page. A full questionnaire is shown at the end of Module 10.
Introduction

The following information is provided to help you to navigate the extensive information that is included in this Kev's test output report.

1. Overall summary chart
The summary results chart provides a quick visual representation of your scores in seven categories that make up the Kev's test profile. Scores upon which to most concentrate are above 3.5, which are considered to be strong and scores below 2.75, which may be in need of further development. Please note that these category scores are averages. Individual question scores can be viewed by clicking on the category label hyperlink.

2. Category description pages
This report contains three output pages for each of the seven categories. The first of these three pages explains the category, list average scores and then provides high and low score interpretation notes. The second page provides a graphical representation of individual question scores. The third page in the set provides broadly based improvement actions for those individuals wanting to develop their competencies in the overall category.

3. 10/10 Report
The 10/10 Report page provides the raw scores for the top 10 highest scoring questions and the bottom 10 lowest scoring questions out of the 36. It also identifies the categories to which these questions belong.

4. Course and Reading suggestions
This output report includes development suggestions for the two lowest scoring categories out of all the categories. These suggestions include training courses that may prove helpful, as well as specific books that may provide some useful additional information.

5. Development Plan
The development plan takes the five lowest scoring questions on aggregate and puts them into a single page template for individuals to record the specific actions that they plan to take as a result of their feedback during the forthcoming twelve month period. Individuals may draw upon any of the general guidance offered in their feedback report, or perhaps more usefully, draw upon the coaching tips ideas that are also included (see next section).

6. Coaching tips
The overall output report includes detailed coaching tips for the five lowest scoring questions on aggregate (consistent with the one page development plan). These coaching tips provide not only elaborative information about the particular questions but provide some specific advice on what individuals might do to improve their skills or learn new behaviors in the future.
1.9 How to Get the Most from the Janus Performance Management System

Performance appraisal can be a supervisor’s most powerful strategy for feedback and communication, yet it is remarkably under-utilized in organizations; many focus on forms and procedures, rather than on employee development. Some managers are understandably reluctant to do formal evaluations, especially if they think they will be challenged. As we said earlier, it’s often easier to sidestep the real issues, and simply go through the motions.

This is unfortunate. The performance appraisal is one of the few times when the employee and their supervisor/manager can count on having the full attention of the other person. They can use this annual performance discussion to build on the regular feedback and coaching sessions held throughout the year.

The Janus Performance Management System addresses the most common problems experienced during the appraisal process by incorporating ways to eliminate or minimize potential pitfalls. Its effectiveness is based on these “tenets”:

- A performance appraisal must be a truly collaborative process.
- Both people have to prepare for the appraisal ahead of time.
- Regular discussions about performance must be held throughout the year.

The Janus Performance Management System provides two major features to help facilitate collaboration, assist people to prepare themselves for the appraisal process, and get them to engage in regular appraisal discussions. These are:

- A complete set of documentation tools, covering every aspect of an effective appraisal process. Both parties should review and familiarize themselves with these components.
- A flexible open-architecture, competency-based assessment tool that can be used to generate a questionnaire that is tailored to a particular job or a particular situation.

Both of these major features will help make the appraisal experience a positive one for supervisor and manager alike.
1.10 The Underlying Principles of the Janus Performance Management System

Every appraisal system has its rules or guidelines, even though they are not always clear or obvious (and might even be conflicting). The Janus Performance Management System was designed around these ten underlying principles:

1. A performance management system should be clearly linked to a business plan or strategy. The core competencies that the organization needs in order to achieve this strategy should be fully understood.

2. Individuals must accept prime responsibility for their actions and results.

3. The organization should reward and recognize good results and accomplishment.

4. Effective participation in the system ideally requires individuals to understand the strategies and direction of the company and their team/function objectives.

5. All individuals are actively involved in the setting of their own goals, targets, and accountabilities and involved in the assessment of their performance every quarter and at year’s end.

6. Regular performance-update discussions should take place on a quarterly basis. Those involved should regularly monitor and, where necessary, revise action plans to take into account extraordinary business conditions.

7. Each supervisor/manager has a responsibility for coaching their staff for success in their roles. Coaching and two-way feedback should be an ongoing process.

8. Learning is recognized as crucial to individual and business success.

9. Paperwork and “process” administration should be minimal.

10. The system should collaboratively evolve and develop with the organization.

This list of ten underlying principles is not meant to be exhaustive; each enterprise should add its own principles as needed. However, if every employee and supervisor understands and applies each of these items, the appraisal process will be positive and enriching.
1.11 The Four Phases of the Janus Performance Management System
The Janus Performance Management System is an entirely integrated process that can help any organization bring consistency to its efforts to improve performance. However, it goes without saying that if it is expected to help achieve positive results, the system itself must be carefully managed.

There are three phases in a standard appraisal system, which were outlined in the general overview of phases of performance management. Janus adds a fourth phase—competencies.

Janus Open Architecture System

**PHASE 1—INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**
The first step in the Janus Performance Management process is to translate the objectives of the organization, team, or department into individual objectives, thereby establishing performance expectations and accountabilities.

Individual goals and objectives must be realistic and must reflect the expectations that the enterprise has of an employee, as well as the expectations of customers, consumers, and shareholders.

Goal statements should reflect:

- The top 4–6 accountabilities and/or projects of the role to be performed.
- How performance will be measured and tracked.
- The targets set for those accountabilities.
- The key activities the employee will undertake in order to achieve the objectives.
- The specific accountability or project to be singled out as an incentive objective, or an accountability that can be specially rewarded in some way.

To help with the format of these objectives or accountabilities, Janus has developed a complete module on goal/objective setting (Module 3), containing best-practice information to help individuals and their supervisors write goals that are meaningful for both parties.
PHASE 2—COMPETENCY IDENTIFICATION

Janus provides an extensive list of 36 generic competencies in Volume III. The employee and his or her supervisor/manager will identify and agree on the key competencies relevant and necessary to the employee’s job role during the goal- and objective-setting phase of the Janus Performance Management System. As few as three competencies and as many as ten need to be selected.

PHASE 3—REGULAR UPDATES

The Janus Performance Management System assumes that during the appraisal process, there will be ongoing dialogue between the individual appraisee and their supervisor/manager. Modules 4–7 provide information to help optimize the regular update discussions that should be taking place on a continual basis. This includes coaching, giving and receiving feedback, taking corrective action where necessary, and engaging in action planning.

Note: Janus provides full definitions and behaviors of each competency in Module 11 and in the on-line version. The Janus on-line system makes it possible for the employee to gain valuable 180-degree or 360-degree feedback on each of the selected competencies.

PHASE 4—END-OF-CYCLE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL DISCUSSION

The end of a 12-month period is a good time to conduct a formal review of progress made over the whole appraisal period. This formal review typically assesses whether task or project goals have been achieved, and whether developmental progress has been positive. The Janus System provides a full supporting module on conducting a constructive end-of-cycle discussion (Module 8), including a wide range of sample performance evaluations for high, average, and low-performing individuals. These sample forms can be modified or photocopied as-is.

In addition, the electronic version of the Janus System opens up the customized competency-based questionnaire process to allow the individual and the supervisor to each complete an end-of-year version of the profile (as an 180-degree version) and then print out the report to explore relative gaps during an appraisal discussion. Individuals can even gain wider feedback by initiating a full 360-degree profile. This capability should be set up during the goal-setting phase.

The Janus System covers the entire process in some detail. The individual steps are illustrated in the next section of this module. Of course, it should be noted that the individual employee and his or her supervisor need to collaborate if they are to achieve the best possible results. The best way to do that is to get together formally or informally and work through each step carefully.
In most circumstances, they should begin this collaborative discussion by first identifying the organization’s core competencies (see the information at the beginning of Module 11 in Volume III for more detail on the four core areas that the Janus System considers to be critical). Once this has been done, they can link the job role to be performed directly to the performance objectives of the entire enterprise and then select the most relevant competencies. The on-line version of the Janus System should make this a relatively smooth and intuitive process. However, there is no reason why this cannot also be done without the use of the computer system (and the appropriate assessment process designed at the very end).
1.12 Model for Using the Janus Performance Management System Competencies

The individual appraisee and his or her supervisor or manager should go through this 10-step process together.
1.13 Using Janus on the Internet
The Janus Performance Management System is a “flagship” part of the hrdpress.profiles-r-us.com Web site. Click on either of the performance management links to get to the Janus home page, where you can review a range of options.
1.14 The Janus On-line Menu Items Explained

The Janus System contains a complete set of forms and other documentation to help supervisors/managers and employees understand best-practice performance appraisal, organized into a progressive set of steps or modules. They are:

- **Module 1**: Introduction to the Janus Performance Management System
- **Module 2**: Taking the Performance Initiative
- **Module 3**: Setting Performance Objectives
- **Module 4**: Giving and Receiving Performance Feedback
- **Module 5**: Coaching for Performance Excellence
- **Module 6**: Conducting a Performance Update Discussion
- **Module 7**: Handling Unacceptable Performance
- **Module 8**: Conducting an End-of-Cycle Performance Appraisal
- **Module 9**: Career Planning and Professional Development
- **Module 10**: Performance Action Planning
- **Module 11**: Performance Competencies

Each of these modules contains useful background information, checklists, illustrated models, and other forms for supervisors and employees.

Although this documentation set comes in hard-copy format, the entire set is also available via the Web site system. This allows individuals to browse through various modules online or to print as much or as little as they wish.

There are well over 600 pages if the system in its entirety is printed, but we believe that two sections should be carefully read by all appraisal system participants—the Setting Goals/Objectives module (Module 3) and the set of Competencies (described in detail in Module 11 in the last volume of the hard-copy set). This will ensure that the whole process gets off to a strong start with as much clarity and commitment as possible as the cycle begins.

Let’s look briefly at the on-line hyperlinks that exist on the Janus home page on the Internet.

**SET GOALS/OBJECTIVES**

This link takes individuals through the process of setting clear goals and objectives at the beginning of an appraisal cycle. It corresponds to the paper-based material contained in Module 3 of the Janus resource package. There is a considerable amount of useful information about writing goals and objectives that can be effectively measured—the core of the process. Failure to carefully follow these guidelines can make later efforts much harder.
REVIEW AVAILABLE COMPETENCY CATEGORIES

The Janus System uses a generic suite of 36 competency areas or categories from which each customized assessment is built. As few as three and as many as ten individual competencies should be selected. These generic competency categories are as follows:

Analytical
Anticipation/Proactive Thinking
Attention to Detail
Change-Handling Skills
Coaching Ability
Commercial Awareness
Communication
Cost-Consciousness
Creativity/Innovation
Customer Focus
Decision-Making Ability
Delegation
Dependability
Diversity Focus
Drive/Motivation
Emotional Intelligence Ability
Empathizing Ability
Empowerment Ability
Feedback (Giving and Receiving)
Leadership Ability
Listening
Perception/Judgment
Persistence/Perseverance
Planning and Organizing
Stress-Management
Problem-Solving Ability
Quality Focus
Results Focus
Safety Focus
Self-Development
Strategizing Ability
Taking Initiative/Responsibility
Teamwork Ability
Technology Application
Time-Management Ability
Written Communication

These competencies are also shown in diagrammatic form on the next page.

Each competency category can be reviewed individually using the Internet system in terms of its definition, the questions that support it in the assessment, and the coaching tips that are written for each question.
The Janus System provides a generic library of 36 competencies. People can select as few as three and as many as ten competencies to represent the critical components of a particular job role. Ideally, individuals will select seven or eight core competencies.
INITIATE/USE A CUSTOM ASSESSMENT

The Janus System is designed to help any individual create a new assessment or adjust or edit an existing library assessment through the use of a simple six-step process:

**Step 1.** Review the entire list of available competencies (the generic list of 36 competencies is available to view on a single screen) by rolling over each competency label. A pop-up window displays the category definition.

**Step 2.** Select the competencies that are most important to the particular job role(s) to which you want to apply your custom assessment. The Janus System allows individuals to select as few as three competencies or as many as ten (seven or eight are the average). In all cases, select as many categories as necessary to describe the competencies that are critical in determining effective performance.

**Step 3.** Prioritize the competency categories in terms of their overall importance (highest priorities appear first in the final assessment).

**Step 4.** Prioritize the resulting questions. The Janus Internet System automatically generates six questions that are associated with each category. As a result, if eight competency categories are selected, a total of 48 questions will be generated in priority order by category. Individuals will then be asked to adjust the importance of individual questions.

**Step 5.** Assign a name to your custom assessment—a name that is appropriate and relevant that clearly identifies the assessment when you or others use it in the future. In many cases, this will be the name of a particular appraisee or relate to a particular job title. An individual manager might conceivably use the names of all the jobs or people reporting to him or her on individual tailored assessments.

**Step 6.** Use the newly created custom assessment. The Janus System will automatically generate the custom assessment on the Janus home page and allow individuals to use the profile on a self, 180-degree, or 360-degree basis.

Janus also provides a library of assessments for technical, sales, or human resource job roles. Individuals can use them as-is or edit them. The process is the same as explained above, but past selections of categories and profiles are shown throughout (and can be edited if the individual and/or manager chooses to do so).
Module One: Introduction to the Janus Performance Management System

MANAGE/REVIEW INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

Janus provides extensive support in terms of helping supervisors/managers as well as individuals or appraisees engage in positive and constructive communication throughout the entire appraisal cycle. This starts with the initial objective-setting session and the important two-way dialogue that should take place at this stage, and extends to the final review of performance, which looks back at the previous 12 months at the end of the appraisal cycle.

In order to provide a way to use the system conveniently and progressively, Janus organizes the information into modules. The following modules are provided in hard copy in this manual, as well as online:

**Module 1:** Introduction to the Janus Performance Management System  
**Module 2:** Taking the Performance Initiative  
**Module 3:** Setting Performance Objectives  
**Module 4:** Giving and Receiving Performance Feedback  
**Module 5:** Coaching for Performance Excellence  
**Module 6:** Conducting a Performance Update Discussion  
**Module 7:** Handling Unacceptable Performance  
**Module 8:** Conducting an End-of-Cycle Performance Appraisal  
**Module 9:** Career Planning and Professional Development  
**Module 10:** Performance Action Planning  
**Module 11:** Performance Competencies

Each module provides guidance information, notes, ideas, methods, and suggested techniques so that all participants in the performance management system can feel positive about their ongoing experience of the process and encouraged to strive for performance improvement.

The information on the Web site is similar to the paper documentation, but individuals can more readily access information online by using a variety of navigation methods, and then reading and printing only what they need.

Each of the modules listed above can be found by checking on the “Janus Sections” hyperlink on the Janus Performance Management System home page.
PRINT OUTPUT/FORMS/TEMPLATES

The Janus System offers two alternative methods for reporting: a complete, paper-based, modular series (to allow the individual to read reference material as they choose), or a completely integrated Internet-based performance management system. In this latter form, Janus allows individuals to print the information needed by supervisors/managers or individual appraisees: checklists, forms, and guides that can be useful at any stage of the process. This information can be printed as often as necessary, and even modified to suit particular circumstances. As an alternative, individuals might want to print the entire Janus documentation manual and photocopy the forms and checklists that they would like to use. These can be modified by the organization or even by individuals who want to include particular headings or extra categories.

The Janus System also includes a set of four forms in the Appendix at the end of this volume that can be used throughout the entire process. Extra copies of these forms can also be purchased separately.

In addition to forms and guides or templates, the Janus System provides extensive competency-based output reports based on the tailored assessments and profiles that have been created during the goal-setting stages. Every individually-named customized profile established by an individual will automatically come with an extensive interpretive output report when the questionnaire is used:

- by an individual who is assessing himself or herself
- by an individual and the supervisor/manager who is rating their performance
- by an individual seeking full 360-degree feedback

Depending on the number of competencies chosen, output reports can run to twenty, thirty, or even forty pages—enough information to provide in-depth insight into perceived performance, but also a wealth of material essential to professional development and coaching.
THE ELECTRONIC JANUS DOCUMENTATION SYSTEM
This Janus System can be accessed electronically, as well as used entirely as a paper-based program. The home page below gives you a sense of how the electronic version appears.

One advantage of the electronic version of Janus is that individuals can quickly locate the section of the module they need and read the information on-screen. If they then wish to print the section for later use, it can be printed as HTML or in Adobe Acrobat.
Keywords make the site fully searchable, so that managers or appraisees can look up specific areas of interest that appear in several different sections, or modules. The site also includes a wide range of general articles on performance management written by individuals from around the world, offering a variety of alternative views on the subject. These articles are organized into the same section headings as are used in the Janus System modules. Apart from general articles on the appraisal process itself, there are also specific articles about coaching, feedback, how to handle unacceptable performance, etc.; the list is updated on the Web site every three months.

The rest of Volume I will focus on each major component of this effective Performance Management System. The next module—Taking the Performance Initiative—describes why we should carefully prepare ourselves before beginning any performance appraisal program, and outlines how to create a positive climate from the outset.
1.15 Summary of the Janus System
As the preceding pages suggest, the Janus Performance Management System is a large and sophisticated program that has been designed for collaboration: managers and the individuals they are appraising must work together to get the most from the experience. To help them do this, the system provides:

1. **A comprehensive system of fair, open, flexible, and helpful approaches** designed to keep the performance-management process on track throughout the appraisal period. The information is organized in discrete sections or modules so that people are not overwhelmed by too much text when they have specific information needs.

2. **A highly sophisticated on-line system** so only the most appropriate competencies for the role and the objectives are used. A questionnaire based on these competencies will be created to assess progress as often as is desired; it can be a self-assessment, or a 180-degree or 360-degree tailored feedback questionnaire.

We believe that the progressive, easily-accessible components in this system offer the best opportunity to follow through with each step of a formal appraisal process. The collaboration it encourages will not only result in performance improvement, but will make it possible for the organization to develop its workforce and consequently strengthen itself.
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT involves far more than simply assessing an employee’s performance at regular intervals. It unites a number of related tasks: monitoring, coaching, giving feedback, gathering information, and assessing an employee’s work. It accomplishes those tasks in the context of objectives—the immediate objectives of the department, and the overall goals of the organization. And it carries them out systematically, throughout the year.
## Module Two
*Taking the Performance Initiative*

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Module Two
Taking the Performance Initiative

2.1 Introduction
Before we look at the specific components of the Janus Performance Management System in detail in subsequent modules, we need to make a sound philosophical argument in favor of performance management systems. The performance management or appraisal process is widely disliked by appraisees and managers alike, so any system will have to overcome pitfalls or problems before it is accepted and can make an effective contribution.

After we deal with these issues, this module will look at ways in which supervisors/managers as well as employees can involve themselves positively in the process and take the initiative to establish high personal standards and targets. The system should help all stakeholders achieve these targets.

Although the Janus Performance Management System is designed to give managers and employees a strong and positive system that also helps them avoid these common pitfalls, the process inevitably works best with the highest possible levels of personal commitment, optimism, and motivation at every level. This module outlines what is required in these areas.
2.2 The Theoretical Benefits of Performance Appraisal Systems

In most organizations, tasks are quite complex and confusion or ambiguity is high. Increasingly global competition, the demands of customers for excellent service, the revolution in information technology, tighter production cycles, and a range of other factors contribute to these complexities. In addition, managers in most organizations today have a much wider span of responsibility than they used to have. They must be able to help and motivate larger staffs and make sure the work is done to very high standards. This means that individuals are often left to their own devices: they must motivate themselves and find their own ways to perform to expectations.

The old style of “command and control” management does not work well under these hectic, flatter, and more competitive circumstances. There is not enough time to run to management with problems and wait for an appropriate response. Individuals need to be able to solve problems on the spot and take care of unexpected changes as they occur. To be able to cope well with such circumstances, people must be empowered to learn “on the run” and continuously improve and develop themselves to match changing circumstances.

An effective and well-managed performance appraisal process is one of the best ways to provide this ongoing support system, as it can give both individuals and managers a structured process to achieve goals and targets successfully without the need for close supervision.

Organizations are moving away from hierarchies where people worked their way “up the ladder” over many years, toward flatter, fast-responding, more-competitive enterprises. The concept of individual performance management or appraisal is also changing. In the past, performance management was usually something that involved someone at the next level in the organizational ladder playing the role of a “wise” expert, appraising someone who needed development or experience and taking them under their wing. In these circumstances, the person being appraised would likely be given direct task instructions and opportunities to stretch themselves in only a few predefined areas, usually on projects identified or recommended by their supervisor. They would be told in no uncertain terms what they were doing well or not so well.

These days, the best performance management is a very different process. The person being appraised, their peers and other colleagues, and their direct supervisor work together in a partnership in the best circumstances, offering regular feedback at several different levels from all directions. The goal is not to give explicit instructions, but rather to empower the individual so that they can learn and develop their abilities to respond to the changing challenges of their current job, and grow and prepare for future jobs (laterally or higher up in the organizational structure).
The success of any organization now very much depends on the performance of its employees—the teams and the individuals within those teams. The performance of the organization can be objectively gauged by looking at tangible data such as profit or market share, but it's far more difficult to appraise individual performance within the organization. Nevertheless, it is crucial to the “total picture” view of how an enterprise is really performing.

Performance management and appraisal can be thought of as the identification, evaluation, and development of what individuals actually do and what they are supposed to do in an organization. As we have already suggested, this process requires a structured and systematic program with well-defined objectives, guidelines, and procedures that are well known and accepted by its participants. Effective performance appraisal becomes a critical guide for the future, not simply an evaluation of the past. Janus, the ancient Roman god of change, turns his gaze forward as well as back.

Effective and realistic performance appraisal is important to employees. It improves their morale, strengthens their sense of belonging, and increases their commitment to the organization. Tangible rewards, identification of strengths and weaknesses, and assessment of career opportunities and direction are also extremely important outcomes of a good appraisal system. An effective performance management system significantly develops individual capability and motivation, and so improves organizational capability, responsiveness to change, and bottom-line productivity. It also helps people to learn on the job by helping them identify and work on competencies that are stifling their performance or that ought to be developed even further.

If performance management is set up as an ongoing year-long process of setting goals and objectives and giving ongoing coaching and feedback, it will be an important vehicle for the individual manager’s success. The performance appraisal is the annual codification of this ongoing process—the means by which managers can hold the reins of their department in their hands, monitor progress so that they will know when something goes wrong and be able to make mid-course changes while they’re relatively easy to make, build and sustain good relationships with employees, and encourage team development among employees.

Managers who know how to make the best use of the performance appraisal system are more effective managers.

Performance management means more than assessing an employee’s performance at regular intervals. It unites a number of related tasks: monitoring, coaching, giving feedback, gathering information, and assessing an employee’s work. It accomplishes those tasks in the context of objectives—the immediate objectives of the department and the overall goals of the organization. And it carries them out systematically, throughout the year.

Not all organizations go about this the same way, but the basic strategy is the same and the benefits are the same. A performance management approach makes better use of the performance appraisal because it uses the information and the performance appraisal interaction to support definite goals; it also makes for a fairer and more accurate performance appraisal, because defining the goals of the organization and the department clearly helps the appraisee and his or her supervisor create more job-related competency-based criteria for the appraisal.
A good performance management system will also help clarify the organization’s core values or intentions—ideals such as high quality, exemplary customer service, positive interpersonal communication among staff, contribution to profitability, and ethical behavior. If you clearly state and effectively communicate these ideals within a powerful performance management system, you will be guiding an individual employee in the course of his or her daily work, and clearly communicating that each employee is accountable for how things are done as well as what is done.

These are just some of the benefits and advantages of a good performance management system. As we said, not everyone likes or appreciates the process in practice. In the next section, we’ll take some time to examine why people so often dislike performance appraisal systems.
2.3 Why Employees Dislike Performance Appraisal Systems

In his book *How to Do a Superior Performance Appraisal*, Michael Swan articulately describes why some employees and managers dislike such measurement or appraisal systems:

“For employees receiving performance appraisals, feelings of distrust and trepidation are easy to understand: they’re being judged, after all. Employees know well in advance when judgment will be pronounced, but often have a much vaguer idea of what standards they’re being judged by and how their manager thinks they measure up to them. From a practical standpoint, many things hang in the balance: salary, promotions, and perhaps the specific responsibilities that will be expected of them in the future.

The performance appraisal is therefore one of the most emotionally charged procedures in management. People have very strong feelings about their being evaluated. Employees can feel vulnerable at this point. If their work hasn’t been satisfactory, now is when the boom will fall. If they’re personally pleased with what they’ve accomplished during the appraisal period, they may know from experience that their idea of good performance may be completely at odds with their manager’s and they may be due for a rude awakening. Who knows what insidious little checkmarks are being made on forms that will go into their permanent records, informing any future manager that they “lack initiative” and “have difficulty facing the facts” about themselves. Employees may try to dispute the assessment, but they know their word carries much less weight than their boss’ supposedly expert opinion. The process may seem completely irrational to them but they don’t have much to say about it.”

No wonder employees who are comfortable in their jobs most of the year can feel at appraisal time like victims of authority in the form of an arbitrary manager or vague expectations of performance. The appraisal process won’t be trusted to deliver any of the benefits that it promises until these obstacles are overcome.

Unfortunately, this natural distrust of a system is real in even the most empowering and culturally positive enterprises. Any organization that chooses to ignore such concerns and misapprehensions does so at its peril.
2.4 Why Managers Dislike Performance Appraisal Systems

Ironically, the manager, who is beginning to look pretty scary to the employee as the day of reckoning nears, usually feels the same way about the performance appraisal. In fact, they have even more reasons for their lack of enthusiasm. Most of us don’t like to sit in judgment of other people. It’s that much worse if by doing so you risk offending someone whose continuing enthusiastic cooperation is a necessity for your own success.

Your employees’ performance is partly their responsibility and partly yours, but in most circumstances, the fairness, accuracy, and effect of the appraisal on future productivity and employee morale are entirely the responsibility of the employee’s immediate supervisor. What if what you think is accurate leads to an Equal Employment Opportunity complaint? Can you be sure of avoiding that, even if you believe you are doing everything right? How can you really be fair and objective anyway, when the tasks the employee performs are so hard to measure and you can’t separate one employee’s contribution from the overall team effort? So much seems to fall on the shoulders of the manager doing the performance appraisal; it’s no wonder that many managers do not relish the task.

All these concerns can stifle managerial enthusiasm, but there is another “reality” the manager is very conscious of: managers are not usually in a position to choose the system that’s going to be used in the performance appraisal. In most cases they will have little or no input into the development of either the form or the procedures. In large organizations, this is understandable and often inevitable. After all, one of the purposes of the performance appraisal is to provide job role data that can be compared. In the interests of fairness, the standards used to measure each employee should be the same; chances are, they would not be the same if each manager had the option of choosing their own appraisal system.

In some organizations, the performance appraisal affects salary, human resource planning, and career development. The performance appraisal might even be the only formal mechanism for communicating to employees what their job is. And increasingly, the performance appraisal is used as legal documentation for validating decisions to promote or not promote.

Finally, if the performance appraisal is so important, some managers ask why they aren’t given more support in conducting them. According to many surveys conducted in recent years, only 25% of managers who do performance appraisals receive support or training for it. When there is training, it doesn’t go much further than to explain how to use the form, administrative procedures, and deadlines for submitting and getting the forms approved.

Managers will be tempted to ignore the need to make the performance appraisal work in reality. After all, the organization seems satisfied with what works only on paper. Why not glide through it, fill the forms out with a minimal effort, and talk about it informally with the employee over coffee? Surveys show that in some companies, employees are not even aware of the existence of formal performance appraisal programs. No wonder they’re surprised to learn that the once-a-year informal chat with the boss had anything to do with a formal review of their performance. The managers administering those programs are just going through the motions, but they are also selling themselves short because the performance appraisal can be a powerful management tool. Of all the parties involved, the managers are the ones who have the most to gain from such a system. Unfortunately, even this powerful argument might not make any difference.
2.5 What Goes Wrong and Why: Common Appraisal Errors

Apart from the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the nature of a given performance appraisal system and the relative dislike or distrust on the part of the appraisees and/or appraisers, there will be mistakes during implementation. In fact, the way that a performance appraisal system is administered and the training given to the managers using it probably have the most to do with the effectiveness of the appraisal than any other factor. Some performance appraisal systems prevent or even encourage these errors more than others.

The most common appraisal mistakes fall into these categories:

1. Inadequately defined standards of performance
2. Over-emphasis on recent performance
3. Reliance on gut feelings
4. Misunderstanding or confusion about performance standards
5. Insufficient or unclear performance documents
6. Inadequate time allocated for the discussion
7. Too much talking by the manager/supervisor
8. Lack of follow-up planning/action

Let’s look at each of these in a little more detail.

1. UNDERLYING DEFINED STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

The standards must be defined if the performance appraisal is to have any meaning for the employee, for the organization, and for the rating manager.

If a rater says to an employee, “I don’t think you’re trying hard enough,” the employee might reply, “Compared to what? What was the standard against which you held me? How do I know what you expect of me? If I was performing up to the standards, how would you know it and how could I prove it?” If there are no good answers to those questions, you will not only have a disgruntled employee, but also a potentially invalid performance appraisal. A clear and measurable idea of “effective” or “superior” job performance is the indispensable basis for any performance appraisal. Yet all too often it’s missing. Managers must know what they expect of their employees and they must communicate these things when the evaluation period for the job begins. Otherwise, evaluations can’t be made or defended at the end of the appraisal period and employees won’t know where to direct their efforts.
2. OVER-EMPHASIS ON RECENT PERFORMANCE

If a supervisor or manager isn’t gathering data throughout the appraisal period, whatever happened in the beginning will tend to get pushed back further and further into memory and the manager will wind up basing the appraisal on the events of the most recent month or two.

It’s not just that the manager tends to forget what happened more than a few months ago—it’s also a matter of wishful thinking. Maybe there was a problem with this employee’s performance earlier in the year, but now apparently it’s solved. Why hold it against them, and why bring it up? In fact, employees themselves remember what happened in the past month or two more readily than events that occurred nine months ago, or see the “distant” past as less relevant. Needless to say, this tendency leads to a flawed and inaccurate appraisal.

It’s just as inaccurate, by the way, if the employee happens to be having some difficulty at the time the appraisal is being completed and you give insufficient emphasis to their performance during the early part of the year. Either way, you’re being overly influenced by a particular moment in time, which is very misleading. It’s certainly not the balanced picture that you want to record.

The only way to counteract this psychological tendency is for the manager to conscientiously record data throughout the year, and to judge what is in the record, rather than only on how the employee has performed lately. The challenge is to know what to look for and take a disciplined approach to collecting information throughout the entire cycle.

3. RELIANCE ON GUT FEELINGS

Gut reactions to an employee’s performance or behavior are relevant. There’s nothing wrong with taking into account a general sense of employees: how able they are and how hard they’re trying. However, these reactions are, by themselves, notoriously untrustworthy, not legally defensible, and not much use when it comes to giving feedback to the employee. The manager needs to be able to say: “I don’t think you’re trying hard enough. Here’s my evidence that in fact you have not met the standard that we agreed upon at the beginning of the year.”

There must be some evidence to back up a gut reaction; otherwise, employees will argue about it, especially if they don’t even know what is being said. In fact, there’s no likely benefit that’s going to come from sharing gut reactions, even if they are correct. And sometimes with evidence, you find your gut reaction is modified by the facts.
4. MISUNDERSTANDING OR CONFUSION ABOUT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Even if clear standards of performance have been established, the manager might know what is expected of the employees, but the employees might not understand this because the standards were not explained to them properly. In these circumstances, how likely are they to measure up to the standards?

If employees aren’t given an adequate explanation of the standards by which they’re being evaluated, the ratings at the end of the year, even if accurate, could be considered as unfair. Some employees will feel tricked, but most of all, they are not likely to perform well in the first place, because they didn’t have a target or benchmark to guide them. The ideal performance management process described in subsequent modules of the Janus System builds in regular discussions about standards throughout the entire appraisal period.

As we’ll see, the annual or end-of-cycle performance appraisal meeting is only one step. A good manager coaches, counsels, monitors, and develops his or her employees all through the year. It’s possible to do that only if you make goals and standards crystal clear to the employees, and keep these goals in the forefront of their minds.

In many organizations, the performance appraisal is often the only way employees learn what is expected of them. Even if that’s not entirely true in your organization, the performance appraisal is everyone’s chance to fine-tune that communication. This is particularly true if the organization uses a strong competency-based system (as the Janus process recommends). At the global level, if you invest high-quality time and effort into developing “core” organizational competencies, you can use these as guiding “umbrella headings” under which specific or particular competencies can be developed and communicated. This helps to clarify what is expected and important to the enterprise, but also clarifies to what standard employees have to develop their expertise in order to be rated “successful.”

Employees should know what the standard is, but also have a general idea how judgments are reached. Helping them understand this will go a long way toward winning the employees’ cooperation and positive collaboration in the appraisal process. It will also make people less defensive in their performance appraisal discussions.
5. INSUFFICIENT OR UNCLEAR PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

It should be obvious that adequate ongoing documentation is a necessity if a rating manager wants to have more than gut reactions or memory to guide the appraisal. Yet of all the mistakes one can make, failing to document performance is the most common, for two reasons:

- Managers don’t often have the time or energy for a chore that doesn’t seem as important when the performance appraisal is a year away as it will seem when it’s just around the corner. In this respect, the performance appraisal is like anything else: paying attention to details and doing your homework pays off.

- Managers tend to be ambivalent about the appraisal process as a whole. They are often reluctant to write down anything negative about an employee: Even if they’re not hesitant to confront the employee with the problem, they think, “Why write it down? Why let it go into the permanent record, where it will follow them around for as long as they work here?” To ask these questions is to ask whether performance appraisals should be done at all.

Our response to that concern is that a performance record in which accurate positive and negative factors are mentioned will, in fact, give a more balanced and more accurate picture than the one in which negative factors have been tactfully neglected. It’s certainly a necessary basis for a plan to improve an employee’s developmental needs.

Before a manager gives an individual employee a break in terms of performance evaluation, he or she should consider how it will affect everyone else in the organization. It clearly would not be fair to other employees to refuse to distinguish adequate from inadequate performance. Needless to say, if an employee is at least fired for incompetence and the case has to be defended in court, an accurate record will be important. For that matter, suppose the manager at last finds it necessary to take disciplinary action on that individual. If the documentation states that for the past three or four years the employee has been “fully effective” or “fully successful,” how can the manager justify that action when it is challenged?

A poorly documented appraisal can also hinder an employee’s advancement. If there is an opportunity elsewhere in the organization, that department manager will look through each candidate’s file. If an employee’s strengths and assets are not presented clearly and accurately, he or she might not get considered.

Managers must be sure positive performance is also documented. The Janus System addresses this difficulty by emphasizing that every appraisal must be specifically competency-based, and that the process must be highly collaborative.
6. INADEQUATE TIME ALLOCATED FOR THE DISCUSSION

It doesn’t take long to do a performance “appraisal” if you’re just going to take the form and read it to the employee verbatim, or hand it to them and say, “Please read this and respond.” If the performance management or appraisal system is going to be a successful way to develop your employees, you need to help them improve in their current job, and perhaps increase their opportunity for advancement or promotion. The manager should then schedule enough time to discuss the employee’s performance in depth. Don’t just give the employee the evaluation; have a proper two-way dialogue about the implications for the appraisal.

7. TOO MUCH TALKING ON THE PART OF THE MANAGER/SUPERVISOR

Sounds like a paradox, doesn’t it? After all, isn’t the point of the performance appraisal discussion to let the employee know how he or she has done? Actually, a manager needs to listen as well as talk if they want to get the most out of the discussion. The appraisal might be over, but there are still things he or she needs to know. This discussion is a chance to get at the root of performance problems and make the appraisal motivating. The manager needs to know what that employee is thinking and feeling, and listen carefully to what the employee is saying. Good interviewing as well as presentation skills are needed here.

If the selection interviewer does most of the talking, how much is he or she learning about the applicant? The same thing can be asked in the performance appraisal process. If you are doing too much talking, you are really giving only a summary. If you can get the employee to respond, you might find out that he or she grudgingly agrees or accepts what you say, even if he or she is not happy to hear it. You can get the individual to explain why things haven’t happened; you can then together come up with some kind of plan on which you can both agree. Hence, managers need to get the employee involved; to do that, they have to get the employee to talk more—not less!

8. LACK OF FOLLOW-UP PLANNING/ACTION

If as a manager I’ve done everything right but there is no follow-up or action plan, I am less likely to meet my objectives. To manage the performance of others (or when an individual is thinking about their own performance), it is critical that I formalize a plan (preferably in written form) for improving performance in the current role. I should also make sure there is another plan to help the employee develop additional competencies, so he or she will be ready for future challenges that appear on the horizon.
2.6 Why bother with Performance Management?

Of all the questions connected with performance management or appraisal, Why have them? is still one of the questions most often asked. Having said this, it is worth noting that those who ask this question are not always looking for a sensible answer. In fact, to get one would mean that they would have to question their attitude and why they asked the question in the first place. This is because so often the question is asked sarcastically or with more than a hint of cynicism. Those who ask why consider any measurement of their personal performance to be an imposition, a nuisance, or an infringement of their rights. Because of this attitude, they fail to benefit from all the positive objectives behind giving and receiving feedback. These people ask the question not to get a sensible answer, but rather to reinforce their opinion that any measurement of performance is a waste of time.

We have already admitted that, for a variety of reasons, people do not chomp at the bit to do performance management. It is not always convenient, and there is fear and deep apprehension about who is going to do the measuring and whether or not they have any hidden agenda. More often than not, this fear is because the performance management process is welded to the question of pay. The real concern is that the whole process might be biased, might not be objective, and might not be a fair assessment of individual performance.

The Janus Performance Management System is deliberately designed to focus on development. It specifically avoids any effort to rank employees or to determine differential pay or merit increases; these are separate activities that organizations must deal with independently. It is important not to compromise the developmental benefits of the performance management system as it is presented here.

Performance management might be scary or inconvenient, but it is absolutely critical. It also has nothing to do with control. Some of the benefits are outlined below.

An effective performance management system . . .

- Helps to keep the vision focused and in place
- Sets performance standards and objectives across the organization
- Offers structured two-way feedback on performance and issues
- Systematically identifies training and development needs
- Assists in strengthening and building relationships at all levels
- Maximizes the potential of employees
- Can provide a database of people-skills for succession planning
- Keeps the organization competitive
- Contributes to positive morale (only when it is a meaningful system)

We will look at these benefits in turn and elaborate on each of them in order to understand their significance and how and when they can be applied. Each one helps to make performance management a more meaningful process.
KEEPS THE VISION FOCUSED AND IN PLACE
All performance should be evaluated against the goal of making the organizational vision a reality, so that all employees understand that the contribution they make has a much wider implication than just the immediate job they do. It also ensures that the organization is going in the same general direction. Making the “big picture” part of performance management ensures that individual “empires” are not created and makes it easier to maintain cooperation between colleagues and departments.

SETS PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION
Every part of the organization needs to be standardized in terms of the practices and values that the organization embraces. The standards of performance will be set for each job, but there will be codes of conduct that cut across all departments. These codes of conduct represent how the vision is put into place and operated, and dictate how the organization will “do its business.” No matter where an individual works or for whom, performance management processes should be designed to ensure that there is continuity and standardization of approach when measuring individual contribution.

OFFERS TWO-WAY FEEDBACK ON PERFORMANCE AND ISSUES
Frank and open discussion on individual performance and two-way feedback are integral parts of effective performance management. Any reluctance to be open with a manager who is perceived to be over-critical or downright belligerent is certainly understandable, but if we can keep politics out of the equation, performance management will provide a good opportunity to identify stumbling blocks and agree on next steps.

IDENTIFIES TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
This is one of the fundamental objectives of performance appraisals. When this objective is given the priority it deserves, performance management will be positive and motivational. If people take the time to identify training needs, it will show management commitment to developing the organization’s greatest asset—its people. Using performance management to identify training and development needs shows that the organization can be proactive as well as reactive; career planning and succession planning can become a practical reality.

STRENGTHENS AND BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS
Communication has always been the basis of any successful relationship, and performance management is all about communication. Whether performance has been good or needs serious improvement, having a process to monitor and give feedback provides the opportunity to build strong business relationships. This is more obvious when managers are trained in the delivery of performance management skills and processes.

MAXIMIZES THE POTENTIAL OF EMPLOYEES
The whole implication of the phrase “performance management” is that potential is identified and developed. Potential doesn’t just suggest doing more; it means working smarter, and giving people the opportunity to learn and acquire new skills. Using an objective approach to identifying potential and developing people makes training and development much more exciting.
The Janus Performance Management System

CAN PROVIDE A DATABASE OF PEOPLE-SKILLS FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING
If the organization has the will and the commitment to use the information that is gathered, as well as the technical ability, then a database can be set up to track the development progress of each member of the staff. (The Janus System’s flexibility provides for this.) If the performance management process includes setting competencies for each job and these competencies have been benchmarked, then it will be relatively simple to monitor performance against these benchmarks. The database allows for cross-referencing of people, skills, and job requirements; it is also an excellent tool for succession planning, giving the organization the opportunity to promote from within.

KEEPS THE ORGANIZATION COMPETITIVE
The expectation that a person will work for the same organization for 20 years or more is a thing of the past. It is widely accepted that the new generations of workers will not have such job stability (and might not even want it). They are likely to move several times during their working life for career advancement. Employability will be more closely aligned with skill level, so organizations will have to develop their workforces if they want to stay ahead of the competition or at least to keep up with it. The organizations that offer real training and development will attract the best people.

CONTRIBUTES TO POSITIVE MORALE (WHEN IT IS A MEANINGFUL SYSTEM)
Morale and achievement will be extremely high in an environment that fits all three of these descriptions:

- Performance management is seen and appreciated as a means for personal development.
- Honesty and frankness are highly valued and used to build sound relationships.
- Working for the organization is challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Performance management is very much about getting the best out of people, and helping them realize their potential. People who feel good about themselves produce good results.

These nine major benefits of performance management can help every organization and every individual, provided the process is properly implemented and monitored and the managers are properly trained. You must also make sure that the right person is doing the right job: if every team is well organized and every position on the team is filled with the right person in the right job, winning would become a way of life. That’s not easy, but if it were, everyone would be doing it and doing it continuously.

The Janus Performance Management System was developed to help individuals and teams get it right every time. We will now turn our focus on how we might overcome the problems and pitfalls we have identified and realize the potential to contribute to organizational success that an effective performance management system can offer.
2.7 Overcoming Performance Management Pitfalls and Problems

We have taken a look at some of the concerns people have with performance management or appraisal systems, but also explained the general advantages. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the relative success of any appraisal system will come down to individual reactions, such as how motivated and enthusiastic a person is to participate positively. Individuals need to go into it with the right mental attitude. Let’s explore what this means.

An Olympic competitor is driven to excel or achieve to the highest possible standards. To do this, they need to carefully understand not only their own capabilities, but also those of others aiming for similar goals. As a result, they need to understand their relative strengths and weaknesses, speed, resilience, attitudes, physical size, and past achievements. This example applies just as much to the individual or team in an enterprise situation, with past achievements of the organization and its competitors perhaps being the first priority.

Before beginning a performance-management program, the individual should look back over past achievements in order to determine what was successful and what was not. The overall goal from this is to learn for the future. All individual and team efforts should be reviewed for the factors that made them successful and those that hindered success. What competitors achieved should also be analyzed.

Encouraging yourself and other individuals to achieve higher standards means shooting for excellence in everything. Of course, any organization that is committed to excellence in everything that it does is only as good as the people who help it work toward such a goal. People have to perform their tasks wholeheartedly and with full commitment and accountability. In a high performing organization, there is simply no room for apathy, mediocrity, or complacency—everyone has to work individually and as a team to become the best.

The journey will be unique in every situation, but there will be several common principles. Perhaps the one most organizations will share is the desire to empower individuals and teams to always give their best. The performance management system will then fairly recognize this contribution.

This is best done by collaboratively setting stretching goals and objectives, maintaining an open two-way discussion process throughout the entire appraisal cycle.

Helping people set goals and objectives that “stretch” their performance is very important, but you should always make sure that people are not setting themselves up to fail, particularly since you want people to respect and appreciate the performance system. If someone you are working with is setting the bar too high, you can always help them lower it to a more achievable and realistic level. Allowing people to set goals that will probably not be reached won’t help them: repeated failure will demoralize and demotivate. It’s much better to help someone take small but achievable steps than large leaps that they can’t make. We will deal with this whole subject of setting effective goals and objectives in Module 3.

A simple checklist to help individuals and teams think about how they can achieve better or higher standards appears on the next page. This is a process best done slowly and carefully; the information can be used as a basis for setting and pursuing more specific goals. It also helps to establish a solid foundation upon which other parts of the appraisal process can be subsequently managed.
ACHIEVING TO HIGHER STANDARDS: CHECKLIST

Make sure that you have plenty of time to think about each of the following questions. (The first response is not always the best.) Use extra paper if you want to make notes or write more detailed responses.

1. What do you value the most, or what most fulfills you? Why?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

2. What do you find most inspirational or motivational in terms of your work?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

3. What signals/signs of difficulty or wasted effort or resources do you see within the organization to which higher standards could be applied?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

4. What do your internal or external customers most expect of you or your team?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

5. What are the one or two major things that you can do to improve your own skills or knowledge, so as to improve your work?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

6. What areas of focus/interest are most in need of higher or better standards, or are likely to yield the most benefit/value to the enterprise?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
2.8 Establishing and Maintaining Positive Motivation and Momentum

Motivation is key to getting people to value a performance management system. People have to feel fully motivated and maintain this momentum over the whole appraisal cycle.

Motivation to succeed (results orientation) is hard to gauge or perceive. However, we think about it when we talk about sports, and we can usually tell when an athlete is “motivated” to achieve a goal (and when they are not).

Most theorists agree that motivation is connected to an individual’s ability to imagine the “win” or achieve their goal. They have a vivid mental picture of what the outcome will look, sound, smell, and feel like, and they “project” this mental picture over and over. If this future image is powerful enough, it will not only catalyze our current actions, but also maintain our enthusiasm when times are tough.

Given the above, it will be easier to set targets and plan to deliver successful results at the earliest possible stage in the appraisal cycle if people remind themselves of the payoffs or benefits of achieving each goal that they set for themselves. This “immersion” process means taking time out to picture this future state.

You can’t do it in a few quick seconds. It has to be a slow, careful, reflective process that can be re-conjured at will. If the individual can’t picture the future state or can’t see any payoffs or benefits, their goal is probably not the right one for them or it might need substantial re-working.

Let’s go back to our sports analogy. An athlete can imagine what it might look or feel like to win a gold medal or receive acclamation from an audience, but while this might indeed be motivating, it’s a far-off target. The athlete should perhaps use something like a “personal best” as a closer goal; it is measurable (the time it takes to run or the distance to throw, etc.). Then the athlete can set stretching targets.

The process is not much different in organizations. For a start, an individual’s “personal best” might be worth reviewing before they settle on what they might achieve or what the “possible best” looks like.

For example, an individual’s goal to train a hundred employees in financial and commercial skills in groups of twenty over the next six months might well involve more preparation and delivery effort in this short period than ever before. The trick is to measure how much. If it is only marginally more, you might add 25% to the target. If it is a lot more, a “stretch” might mean adding only 10% (but maintaining motivation in the first place).
This principle would apply to the delivery of any long-term results that individuals and teams seek in order to create positive outcomes in one of four core competency areas for the enterprise. These four areas are:

1. The long-term strategic focus on the enterprise (particularly on customer needs).
2. The extent to which innovation has been applied to organizational processes and there is continuous improvement.
3. The ability of the organization to maintain collective motivation of teams and individuals, and empower people to generally give their best.
4. The organizational capability to manage risks and resources, and to add value in everything that it does.

Each of these four areas serves as a broad heading under which specific goals and results can be pursued in a variety of different ways. At the highest level, these might be results in terms of better customer service, quality, employee performance, operational efficiency, cash flow, cycle time, etc. Equally, we could be seeking results at the more micro level—i.e. reducing employee absenteeism, reducing numbers of complaints, eliminating rework or waste, or finding ways to save enterprise or team money. From a behavioral standpoint, these core areas serve as competency headings under which individual competencies can be specified and applied. (The Janus System does this.) This subject of core competencies is elaborated further in Module 11 (Volume III).

Over a period of time, you will inevitably realize that some results will be next-to-impossible to achieve or be entirely unattainable. (This might not be the case in reality.) Just remember that if motivation is lacking, it will seem harder to focus and make any progress whatsoever. Under such circumstances, goals or milestones can be ignored or forgotten, or relaxed, deferred, or dropped altogether. Employees will start to lose their enthusiasm for the performance appraisal process if this happens.

In her book “The David Solution,” Valerie Stewart writes about Michelangelo’s reaction when he was asked how he created his statue of David. “It’s easy,” he said. “You just chip away the bits that don’t look like David.” The parallel here is that individuals are capable of chipping away at the parts of organizations that act as obstacles or inhibitions to the achievement of personal and corporate success. It’s all about how to reclaim the David in all of us, however encrusted he or she might be by sheer bureaucracy. Our objective should consequently be to reach inside our own block of marble to see what can be done to break through the potential morass of organizational bureaucracy and the myriad reasons why people say things can’t be done, and help people around us to do the same.

In the end, an individual’s results-orientation is an attitude rather than a learned skill. As such, it is worth adopting the attitude that we should all try to finish what we start, however small the task. The downside of not taking such a focused attitude is that if a tiny task or sub-goal is dropped or missed, it creates a potentially “slippery slope” where bigger and bigger tasks start to slip. It is on these “slippery slopes” that an effective performance management system must firmly stand.
If we are to establish the best possible and strongest foundation for the performance management system, the key place to concentrate our first efforts is on an individual's behavior and attitude. The remainder of this module will therefore focus on a person's base motivation, proactivity in taking initiative, and overall levels of optimism about tackling their goals.
2.9 Performance Proactivity

What we have been hinting at in the last few pages is the importance of being “proactive” in the way a person mentally prepares to engage in the appraisal process, whether or not they can be encouraged to take responsibility or initiative regarding their appraisal.

“Proactivity” is a term used to represent the willingness of an individual to take responsibility for their thoughts and feelings, and then act on them. **A proactive person is a person who realizes that they have the freedom to choose how they think, and then responds accordingly.** A reactive person tends to blame others or events for their behavior or performance and not take appropriate action.

For example, aggressive people will sometimes blame their behavior on the situation. (“You made me angry,” or “This traffic jam makes me really irritated.”) The reactive person does not recognize the role thinking has as a link between the situation and their behavior.

In reality, a situation is not aggressive in or of itself and it does not produce aggression. Traffic jams do not make us irritated. Not meeting the budget does not make us aggressive. It is our perception of these situations and our underlying attitude and beliefs that lead us to behave in a certain manner. This is why many people exposed to the same situation respond differently: How they choose to react to the situation is the key to their behavior. Some people respond more constructively and effectively under pressure than others.

Other factors may also impact our perception of the situation. For example, our skills, knowledge, education, values, and upbringing all have some bearing on the way we respond. The proactive person is aware of the impact of these factors on their thinking and is empowered to stand back from the limitations of their past and demonstrate the freedom to choose how they will respond in the future. **Proactive people respond to their values, whereas reactive people respond to their emotions.**

This is not to say that proactive people do not become emotional or occasionally negative. When they get that way, they are aware of their feelings and negativity, but choose to challenge their underlying assumptions and beliefs and adopt a more constructive and values-based thinking pattern.

Proactive people are consciously aware of their thinking and the impact it has on their behavior and performance. They competently choose constructive responses. We need to encourage proactive thinking if we want the performance management system to work well or to be a success.
2.10 Understanding the Impact of Proactive and Reactive Thinking

As we have already suggested, reactive thinking is all about “I am not responsible.” Someone else is responsible for my irritation, etc. Proactive thinking, in contrast, is based on the attitude that “I am responsible.”

We need to listen carefully to our language and that of others to determine the level of proactivity and reactivity. If we catch ourselves thinking in a reactive manner, we should challenge our thinking and our assumptions. This is the core of proactive thinking.

Read through each of the statements below and determine whether you think they reflect proactive or reactive thinking:

1. The management reporting systems won’t allow for timely and accurate information. I wasn’t aware that we were over budget until two weeks after the event.

   Proactive   Reactive

2. We didn’t meet our waste budgets because supply kept forwarding faulty products and raw materials.

   Proactive   Reactive

3. I was angry, so I went over to the human resources department and gave them a piece of my mind.

   Proactive   Reactive

4. I know I did not achieve my objective. I don’t think I did enough preparation before entering into the meeting. As a result, the meeting did not go as well as planned. I have arranged to speak to my manager about role-playing a few negotiation scenarios, and I feel confident that next year I will secure the required contracts to meet budget.

   Proactive   Reactive

5. We didn’t achieve our objectives because I didn’t think our team had the right attitude toward success.

   Proactive   Reactive

6. Our sales target wasn’t achieved, due to production scheduling problems. I discussed this major order with the production department two months before the delivery date and then every week thereafter, and assisted in several rescheduling meetings. Despite this, the goods were not available.

   Proactive   Reactive

7. The assembly team is just not interested. They don’t seem to take pride in their product or concern about variations in output. I have spoken to them as a group twice in the last twelve months, but this seems to have no effect.

   Proactive   Reactive

(continued)
8. The trial run was a failure. The operations department did not seem to be very enthusiastic, and I believe they had a negative mind-set from the beginning. I told them they had to cooperate. These trials will never work unless everyone pushes themselves.

9. Distribution seem to be too busy to listen to my feedback, so I decided to wait a few weeks.

10. We have a communication issue that needs to be resolved. I believe that there are times where you do not listen adequately to my argument, but I can also see that there are times when I am not assertive enough. I need to be more convincing and direct in the expression of my ideas, particularly when I think that you are not listening.

Items 4, 6, 7, and 10 represent proactive rather than reactive responses, but even these simple situations are not straightforward. In essence, to be proactive, an individual needs to recognize that they can at least try to influence circumstances and events, and not be a victim of them. They might not succeed, but if everyone at least takes responsibility for trying, performance will typically lift or improve. In other words, individual accountability is necessary before people or teams can be held collectively accountable.
2.11 Taking Responsibility for Performance

In the book “The Eagle’s Secret,” David McNally makes the following point:

“To live is to make choices continually that shape the very essence of who we are. Every day is filled with defining moments, opportunities for our courage to be demonstrated and our character to be built. Taking responsibility for themselves and their role in the world is, unquestionably, a key characteristic of thrivers.”

Unfortunately, not everyone takes such responsibility for themselves. Many people even try to pin blame on others. Knowing that, we will probably have to invest considerably more effort into the whole process of managing life or personal change. Of course, personal and organizational change is always one of the constant realities embedded in any performance management system.

Although every individual’s reaction to change is clearly unique, widespread research indicates that there are four broad reaction “types” or styles:

**Pioneers** tend to jump into change immediately. They are happy taking risks and try see the benefits of the change initiative before anyone else climbs aboard. Pioneers make up a relatively small proportion of the total population.

**Early adopters** will also accept new ideas and change quickly, but with a little more caution than the pioneers. Early adopters typically need only the broad signposts to go forward. They don’t need all the details.

**Followers** are often people who will watch the progress of the pioneers and early adopters, but they need to see other followers accept the change before only slowly moving forward. They generally make up the majority group in a change situation.

**Resisters** are clearly uncomfortable with change, and will actively hold on to existing practices and methods as strongly as they can. Although often smaller in number than the follower group, resisters can still exist in large numbers, depending on the situation.

Any individual wanting to take responsibility for their own performance and that of others at a personal level and who is interested in being a role model to others should try at least to be an early adopter and help others make an early transition. Although this may not be entirely comfortable at the outset, with practice it can become a relatively automatic response. Put another way, the performance management system will be most effective when individuals take charge of themselves first, and help others to do the same.

Facing up to change, taking the initiative, being personally responsible, and being accountable are all easy to talk about and harder to do.

We all lapse at times into “neutral” about life, preferring to temporarily spend our time thinking about the past or the present with little or no time spent on thinking about what the future might hold. However, we have probably also had the experience of having someone in our life who makes us stop and think about the days or years ahead. The value of doing this and helping others do the same is immeasurable; it is all too easy for life to speed by. If we do not consciously think about the future, we will be more inclined to become victims of the future rather than masters of it: reactive, rather than proactive.
If we do something the way it has been done before (either in our own work environment or in another), it might not work, even though it had been successful elsewhere. Factors such as the environment, how long ago the previous success occurred, socio-economics, demographics, or even our own stage of professional or personal maturity will all affect the result. We need to take these things into account ahead of time.

Don’t slavishly do only what has worked in the past or accept the status quo. At the earliest stage of the overall appraisal cycle, ask *In what way might I approach this task/situation/event/issue differently?* This helps to keep the thinking free and open in the early stages, even if you do decide to stick with the tried and trusted in the final analysis.

Engaging in new and different ways of doing things might not be so easy. Taking risks requires courage, and so does being a “pioneer” or “early adopter.” However, we all know that actions often speak many times louder than words: People are more likely to follow an individual’s lead by seeing someone do it instead of encouraging us to do it. Managers in particular have a responsibility to be role models for new and fresh thinking, optimism, and action.

In the final analysis, taking responsibility means making tough decisions today in order to make things better for ourselves and others tomorrow.

A list of ways in which individuals can take more responsibility and control of their performance appears on the next page.
TAKING RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTROL: CHECKLIST

1. **Maintain an open and optimistic attitude.** Be open to the situation or the circumstances, as well as to the problems, issues, or challenges that you must deal with.

   Notes on how to do this: ____________________________________________

2. **Make strong personal commitments.** State your beliefs and values openly to others, and commit to every goal for which you can be held accountable.

   Notes on how to do this: ____________________________________________

3. **Plan and organize your time.** Build flexibility into your schedule so you can deal with situations that do not go according to plan, or you run into problems that need sorting out.

   Notes on how to do this: ____________________________________________

4. **Walk the talk.** Do the things that you commit to do and practice what you preach, so that you create trust. Say what you mean and mean what you say as you communicate.

   Notes on how to do this: ____________________________________________

5. **Jump in first.** Avoid waiting for others to volunteer or take the initiative when there is something important to be done.

   Notes on how to do this: ____________________________________________

6. **Follow through and persevere.** When you’ve made a commitment, stick to your task and persevere through the difficult times—even when the obstacles are significant.

   Notes on how to do this: ____________________________________________
2.12 The Link between Proactivity and Optimism

In summary, what we have suggested up to this point is that people will have respect for the performance management system if people are proactive and optimistic and motivated to engage fully in the pursuit of their goals.

Proactivity and optimism tend to work together in the following way:

The horizontal axis in the illustration represents a continuum of behavior and attitude, extending from reactive to proactive approaches. Along the vertical axis, we have a continuum of thinking and behavior—going from pessimism to optimism.

Individuals falling within the proactive and optimistic quadrant are likely to be highly independent individuals who demonstrate initiative, enthusiasm, and self-directed behavior.

The proactive optimist is likely to generate their own solutions or paths to future goals, and take personal responsibility for their own efforts and the efforts of those around them.

The reactive optimist is likely to be a “conscientious doer” who might not generate their own ideas or initiatives, but will certainly work toward achieving goals and objectives that are given to them in a very optimistic and enthusiastic manner.

The reactive pessimist is likely to be a negative thinker or “doom-sayer,” cynical and critical. This kind of person is likely to blame others.

The proactive pessimist is unlikely to achieve their full potential. They might have unfulfilled dreams, and will demonstrate variable performance.

An effective performance management system should encourage people to move out of the bottom left quadrant as much as possible and into one of the other three more-empowered areas.
2.13 Taking the Performance Initiative

If we understand our own behavior and the behavior of people around us, we can improve our level of optimism and ability to take the initiative. This means becoming more aware of our thinking, as well as of our attitudes, beliefs, and values (and helping others to do the same). As we have seen in this module, this means that we should:

- Challenge thinking, attitudes, and beliefs.
- Focus on solutions, not problems.
- Accept responsibility for our actions and outcomes, instead of blaming.
- Develop a learning orientation to failure as well as success.
- Ask others what they learned from failure.
- Try to empathize as much as possible in a proactive and optimistic way.

To do these things, we will have to start paying attention to our thinking patterns and their impact on our behavior and performance. Proactive and optimistic patterns of thinking will lead to more successful and constructive behavior, and therefore successful performance.

We should also always remember that we are personally responsible for the development of our thinking patterns and attitudes. We need not be constrained by the limits of our past or the conditioning of our upbringing, education, peer group, or culture. We have the freedom to choose the manner in which we think and respond.

**We have the freedom to choose how we perform and how we choose to manage the performance of others.**

As team members, we also have a responsibility to make sure that our peers are focused on solutions, and maintain a healthy and optimistic attitude about the way they try to achieve their goals. We can help them become aware of their thinking, and challenge patterns that are not constructive or successful. We are all responsible for establishing an environment of success, learning, and progression. Our thinking style and values are the key determinants of this type of culture.

If you are a reactive person, you will tend to blame others for your poor performance, and rationalize your failure. You will probably feel uncomfortable when someone confronts you about needing a higher level of responsibility. You are likely to reject feedback or criticism, in fact, and will focus on problems rather than on solutions.

On the other hand, if you are a proactive person, you will tend to accept responsibility and initiate plans to achieve expected outcomes. You will welcome feedback and criticism, and focus on solutions rather than problems.

Whether you are reactive or proactive, it pays to take time to think about and consider appropriate responses to the performance feedback you receive: it is this willingness to be open, to listen, and to change that is the platform upon which better performance is ultimately built.
The point is that the final accountability for the success of the performance management system rests with the individual manager/supervisor and employee. That is why this system is being made available to individuals as well as entire organizations; it provides information that can help sustain their commitment and achieve the best possible long-term results.
2.14 Summary
In this module, we have suggested that an organization's managers or employees might not easily accept a performance management system, even if it is well-designed, collaborative, or positively geared. Perhaps they have had negative experiences with the appraisal process, or fear that the judgment or assessment might not be fair or handled well.

Rather than be put off by these attitudes, smart leaders will carefully plan ways to overcome any feelings of resistance by making sure that all individuals appreciate the personal and developmental benefits of active and positive participation in the process. They communicate constantly and effectively, and make major efforts to help individuals feel enthusiastic, committed, and optimistic.

In the final analysis, it is on a foundation of high enthusiasm, commitment, and optimism that individuals start to take proactive action. In so doing, they set personal and team goals, and accountabilities that matter; they then strive hard to hit their targets, and in so doing, take responsibility for personal development and their individual role in helping their enterprise achieve the outcomes it desires most.
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (often referred to as goals or accountabilities) provide both the appraiser and the appraisee with the criteria needed to objectively discuss, monitor, and evaluate performance. Since employee objectives tie in with the objectives of the organizational unit or department and those of the company, performance objectives act as the cornerstone of effective performance management.
# Module Three

## Setting Performance Objectives

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Module Three
Setting Performance Objectives

3.1 Introduction
Everyone seems to have a little advice on how to set and achieve goals and objectives. We are encouraged to set goals for school, college, work, sports, and even for retirement; we believe that we need them if we are to be successful or at least achieve progress in some way. Ironically, this widespread clarion call doesn’t mean that the activity is either widely practiced or done effectively.

People who do not set goals suggest that the process is often a waste of time and energy. Those who set them admit to falling short days or weeks later.

Goal-setting might appeal to common sense,
but sense in goal-setting isn’t very common.

This module in the Janus Performance Management System is about how to address this “gap” between the generally supported views about the value of setting goals and the generally very poor opinions people have about following and achieving them.

If we as managers or individuals are to develop our skills in this critical area, we will need a specific process. Let’s explore the steps in such a process, and focus on learning how to set goals for almost any situation.
3.2 The Importance of Performance Objectives

Performance objectives (often referred to as goals or accountabilities) provide both the appraiser and the appraisee with the criteria needed to objectively discuss, monitor, and evaluate performance. Since employee objectives tie in with the objectives of the organizational unit or department and those of the company, performance objectives act as the cornerstone of effective performance management. Clear objectives prevent surprises during Performance Summary and Development Discussions.

Performance objectives:

- Provide an up-front, objective, mutually understood and mutually accepted basis for reviewing and discussing performance results.
- Reduce misunderstandings between the manager and the employee about what performance results he/she is expected to achieve.
- Specify each employee’s role in accomplishing things that are important for the work unit and the organization.
- Help the employee to self-monitor progress by providing clear performance targets to aim for.

**TYPES OF PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

Consider what types of performance objectives are most appropriate for the employee’s specific job for the upcoming performance period.

- **Short-range objectives** can be accomplished within the performance cycle—often within a few weeks or a few months.
- **Long-range objectives** might require a full performance cycle or longer to complete, (and will probably have to be divided into two or three objectives, or spread over several “milestones”).
- **Routine or maintenance objectives** will help you maintain performance at currently acceptable levels, or keep things at a minimum standard.
- **Organizational objectives** contribute directly to the wider organization (such as establishing a new procedure within a unit).
- **Problem-solving objectives** can be set to improve performance that has slipped below acceptable levels.
- **Innovative objectives** are created to stimulate creativity or new thinking, or take a fresh approach.
- **Personal development objectives** are meant to enhance the employee’s development and his/her long-term performance results.

Whatever type of objective fits the situation, the process is the same: to establish clarity, relevance, and commitment. We will explore this process in the next section.
BACKGROUND TO THE PROCESS

Goal-setting or objective-setting as a discipline or activity has a very long history (much longer than most modern management methods). Military leaders have been setting goals since ancient times to win battles and eventually wars. Over time, these skills were developed into systems and methods that are now used in much more mundane circumstances, and applied to much smaller groups or even to single individuals.

In itself, setting goals or objectives is part of a general process of planning for the future. What goal-setting does is to provide a translation vehicle or language, starting with broad direct intent and moving to a tangible step or task that is likely to achieve the intent in some way.

When a goal is relatively simple and only involves one person, translating a broad intention into a specifically stated objective or accountability will be quite straightforward. However, in an organizational setting, it might be much more complex and involve more than just one person. Nonetheless, the process is the same. For example, an organization that wants to increase sales by 5% over the next 12 months is only stating a broad intent. To have any chance of doing this, goals need to be developed that translate this intent into tasks that individually or in combination move the organization toward this overall objective.

Unfortunately, translating intent into specific goals or objectives is only the beginning of our journey. Goals do little to motivate in themselves, unless other steps are taken. Our task now is to unfold each of these steps one by one, and in so doing, inspire every individual to stick to the task.
3.3 Charting Your Ultimate Direction

Performance goals, accountabilities, or objectives describe the specific performance results the employee will be expected to achieve for the year.

They should always go beyond the description of the position, which emphasizes job responsibilities (what the job consists of). Performance objectives specify how well job responsibilities need to be performed; they can be developed by asking two questions:

- What evidence will show successful accomplishment of the employee’s key ongoing job responsibilities against high standards?
- What additional objectives does this employee need to accomplish in order to achieve the overall goals of the team or department during this performance period?

One of the main mistakes that people make in setting goals or objectives is to spend little or no time on “research” or information-gathering. If this is not done properly or not at all, you run the risk of shaping a goal without a context or the confidence that it is grounded in an existing reality.

For example, an athlete will look carefully at their own performance, but also at the performance of others in the same sport, and the conditions, equipment, and other factors that influence that performance. Goals can then be set for position, distance, time, and other measurable targets in the context of this information.

Again, this is easy to do individually, but in a team or in a large department, the effort to gather data can be long and drawn out, and can look more like a “paper chase”: analyzing past strategies, current performance, individual abilities and preferences, and so on. Nonetheless, what you are really doing is trying to steer things in a particular direction. You can’t get “there” unless you know where “there” is.

You might have researched which direction seems sensible, but your intrinsic level of motivation might still not be very high. Individuals and organizations suffer greatly from what are often called “soft” goals: “Some other future time.”

\[
\begin{align*}
S & \quad \text{Some} \\
O & \quad \text{Other} \\
F & \quad \text{Future} \\
T & \quad \text{Time}
\end{align*}
\]

Soft goals are more for show or goals we’d like to achieve sometime in the future but not now. In actual fact, “soft” goals usually mean that the person or the department is really not committed or interested in achieving any change or being held accountable for moving forward to a new position or situation.

In evaluating whether or not this is the case, be sure you understand that low or non-existent motivation to change, at this stage, needs to be addressed separately. Otherwise, setting goals will only be a cosmetic exercise with the seeds of failure already sown. What we are talking about here comes down to the difference between involvement and commitment.
As we saw in the “Taking the Performance Initiative” section, the building blocks of long-term organizational success are individuals who feel enthusiastic and motivated to stretch themselves toward their personal and team targets. If this commitment to performance objectives is missing, the appraisal process will get off to a very poor start (and might never recover).

If commitment looks like a tough hurdle to clear at the outset, overall goals or directional objectives will be equally problematic if they aren’t realistic or they lack tangibility. Take the goal statement

“This company should double in the next year.”

Do they mean double the profits? Double the income? Double the employees? Or something entirely different? This is what we mean by an intangible and perhaps unrealistic goal. This kind of vague direction-setting is all too common, and only serves to confuse people.

You must be very clear about your goals. Bring the future into sharp focus. Sharp can also be remembered as an acronym:

- S – Specific
- H – Hard
- A – Actionable
- R – Realistic
- P – Plans

The acronym only serves to remind us of what we should be doing: to keep our arrows “sharp” enough to stick to our targets.
3.4 Imagining a Possible Future

Our personal or organizational “ship” is now pointing in the right overall direction to sail toward our overall goal in the not-too-distant future. But before we leave the docks, we need more preparation and planning. Most importantly, we need to imagine what it will feel like to get where we want to go.

But how do we know exactly what success will look or feel like? This “imagination” is a critical step needed to create the internal inspiration to start the journey and fuel our efforts along the way. Marketers often describe this effect as:

W-I-I-F-M
(What’s in it for me?)

If we don’t describe the W-I-I-F-M carefully and create the necessary internal motivation, we will inevitably fall short of our target.

Here’s a simple way to imagine achieving a goal: Project a time in the future—this could be 3 months, one year, or even five years from now. From this imagined point in the future, look back at what you probably would have done to achieve your success. “Success” can take many forms, so you will have to define it. For example, a broad goal of winning a monetary bonus might be achieved in more than one way. By imagining the future, the individual (or team) can more easily generate each of these “routes” to success and start to think about the one or two that they are more likely to use.

From this future vantage point, it will be easier to imagine the potential roadblocks or constraints that might lie in your way. If you can, you are already starting to think about the journey and not just the destination. This creates an intrinsic realism and tangibility, and keeps the objective from becoming an unachievable pipe-dream!

Proactive participation in the creation/imagination process means that every individual will have to feel positive about themselves (we will return to that later) and believe that the journey ahead will be interesting and worthwhile.
3.5 Inviting Input and Ideas from Individuals

You might be the only one taking this journey toward an objective, but it will be more achievable if others know where you are trying to go. In a team situation, every member must know the destination if you want everyone to travel in the same direction and feel that they are an important part of the process. In either case, clear simple communication is critical. How you choose to do this is really up to you: You can solicit input in a group session, or you can solicit feedback individually. In either case, the rule is this:

When you are trying to set broad goals, two or more heads are better than one in maximizing your chances of getting there.

Many people and organizations make the mistake of looking only for confirmatory comment. For example:

“**We’ll be standardizing all software next year, so please be prepared.**” This is presented as a “fait accompli.” For the chosen software vendor and individual teams, they need only support the decision and then manage any problems this creates. A more useful way to invite more qualitative input (positive and negative) might be to present it this way:

“We would like to standardize our software in the near future, and would value your input on when this can be done, what the problems or issues are that we need to consider during the transition, and who our preferred vendors should be.”

All goals need ownership. By allowing people free input, you increase the chances that the objective will be more robust in and of itself, and that support for achieving it will be greater.

There will have to be a deadline for input and comment so a draft can be started. If specific input has been valuable or has challenged the direction in which our ship is pointing, it is wise to consider this input in order to clarify your overall thinking. In some cases, this can be done immediately and on your own with some quiet reflective thinking. However, it is occasionally appropriate to set up further meetings or debate to flesh out the possibilities. We have to consider ALL of the possible targets and objectives—not just the ones that we most want to work on or the ones that we know we will enjoy or be good at.
3.6 Developing Draft Goals and Objectives

“Dreaming” about your ultimate destination and inviting input and comment from others is a precursor to your final preparation step—to develop your “draft” goals or objectives.

A simple but effective way to start drafting your objectives is to take your ultimate goal or destination and work backwards in order to think about what you need to start doing now to achieve it. For example, a personal goal might be “to learn French in the next two years.” With this long-term objective, the short-term task might be to buy a French/English dictionary or some tapes, or to get a list of beginner classes and enroll in one of them.

Having used the long-term objective to shape potential actions in the short-term, it should now be possible to develop somewhere between 4–6 over-arching or fairly general objectives or tasks in draft form that reflect what you are actually going to do. Fewer than four is appropriate if only simple tasks are involved, and any more than six can over-complicate or confuse people who will help in achieving the goals. Hence an objective “to reduce waste by 30% within two years” might have the following four goals in draft form:

- “Document all the types of waste.”
- “Measure current levels of waste in each category.”
- “Form waste-management teams to address targets.”
- “Develop supplier relationships to jointly address future consumption needs.”

Overall goals or objectives ideally need to be outcome-focused rather than input-focused. Outcome goals take clear steps in the direction of the ultimate goal, while “input” goals might not necessarily have any bearing on the final goal—they might end up purely as stand-alone activities or be too internally focused to make any real impact. The chart on the next page provides examples of input- and output-focused goals.
INPUT-FOCUSED GOALS

- Increase departmental hours by 10%.
- Design a new procedure.
- Hire a consultant to conduct a study.
- Address the employee morale issue this year.
- Carry out product research study.

OUTPUT-FOCUSED GOALS

- Increase revenue by 5% in the next 12 months.
- Implement at least five customer suggestions per month.
- Reduce expenses by 10% in six months’ time.
- Acquire another retail business in Europe next year.
- Increase employee productivity by 15%.

As this list indicates, the input-focused statements might involve a lot of time, but the result might not be of value. Output-focused goals, on the other hand, are clear about the tangible target that must be achieved in order to be successful, whether the input effort is small or large.
3.7 Assessing Resources and Implementation Issues

Perhaps one of the most basic lessons in the goal-setting process is that any goal will need resources if it is to be achieved. Even a personal goal to, say, give up smoking requires that you think about what will be required of you personally. For example, you might have to work mentally hard to curb the desire to smoke; you might have to destroy any cigarettes that are lying around; and you might even need to purchase some distracting chewing gum to take the place of smoking for a while. If the going really gets tough, you might even need to purchase some quit-smoking product from a drug store or pharmacy. A seemingly simple goal can need lots of resourcing! The trick, of course, is to think about all these resources in advance, and organize yourself accordingly.

If the goals are complex, resource planning will take weeks or months to be done properly. The goal of the United States in 1961 to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade required hundreds of man-hours, thousands of people, and millions of dollars in the resource-planning stages alone. By the time John Glenn placed his first step on the moon, the public was ready to admit that perhaps too many resources had been committed.

The shape of the likely implementation path in achieving the goal also needs careful consideration. For every goal, you must make a detailed list of all the particular implementation steps that are likely to be necessary. Implementation steps need to be sorted into the order/sequence in which they will be carried out. This “sequential path planning” is an important organizational activity: It brings a necessary order to what might be a random set of steps.

Once the sequential task route has been defined for each specific goal, sensible “staging posts” or milestones can be pre-planned in order to take stock of progress when this stage is reached and, if necessary, to re-think or re-allocate resources. For example, a marketing campaign might have two or three milestones at the draft-plan stage—the first trial efforts in the market, and at a halfway point in the actual campaign.
3.8 Finalizing Your Written Goals

At some point, the goal needs to be written down on paper. This is the most “acid” test because a written goal should be entirely understandable by anyone reading it for the first time. In addition, written goals need to draw on all of the input and thinking that has been done so far. Several goals rather than one will need to be written to reflect an intent, and some goals will need to be broken up into parts or milestones.

SMART principles help you monitor how you are doing on your written objectives. The SMART acronym stands for the following:

- Goals or objectives need to be **specific**. Vague objectives lead to problems of misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and ambiguity for everyone. Talk about tangible outcomes—not loose ideas or wishes.

- Goals also need to be **measurable**. Whenever possible, quantitative measures should be used. For example, the objective of a researcher to “promptly meet customer requests for information” is not specific enough, and cannot be measured quantitatively. By contrast, a more-specific goal to “respond to customer requests for information within 24 hours” is measurable.

- Goals need to be **action-oriented**. In the example above, the objective focuses on responding to customer requests for information; it implies an active satisfaction of the customers’ needs.

- Goals also need to be **realistic**. Customer requests for information usually take 48 hours to research. The above goal would need to be adjusted to reflect the reality of the situation and ensure its relevance.

- Lastly, goals need to be **time-framed**. A time limit must be imposed on the attainment of the objective. The researcher might say “meeting customer requests for information within 24 hours within the next three months.”

Goals need to be constantly revised to make sure that each of the SMART criteria is satisfied. This will create far greater clarity for all concerned.

If a goal is a personal one, the only person who needs to understand it is you. However, even in these circumstances, clarity of expression is critical if the effort is to be focused. When you set goals for others, of course, this step will be absolutely fundamental because the only test of clarity is with the reader, not the writer of the goal. To this end, the only true test is to ask more than one person to read your goal or goals and to provide feedback on their relative clarity. The following sentences are all clear goal statements:

- “Send a satellite to Jupiter in 2005.”
- “To run the city’s half-marathon next year, and do it in under 90 minutes.”
- “To increase customer satisfaction by 10% by the end of 2002.”
- “Type all memos and reports within eight hours of receipt, with a 100% accuracy rate.”
- “Recruit three graduate accountants within six weeks.”
- “Stop drinking coffee immediately.”
- “Coach the junior soccer team to a top-three placement in next year’s league competition.”
- “Reduce expenditures by 5% within 12 months.”
A performance goal or objective is a statement of a desired or needed result to be achieved within a specified time and in accordance with quantitative and/or qualitative standards. Accordingly, a performance objective consists of a result commitment with standards—WHAT, WHEN, and HOW. An objective provides direction and a commitment to action; it is a “benchmark” against which actual results and progress toward these results can be compared and measured.
3.9 How to Write Performance Objectives

A performance objective should be written as a result commitment with standards. The result commitment states the planned accomplishment. Standards state time periods or target dates and other measurable criteria in terms of quantity, quality, cost, or how the work is to be done. Standards answer these questions: How soon? How many? How much? How well? They are the criteria against which actual results can be measured.

The following commonly accepted criteria for writing performance objectives are an alternative to the SMART process described earlier:

Specific: Performance objectives should describe in understandable terms exactly what is to be accomplished—the WHAT, WHEN, and HOW.

Limited in number: Since performance objectives supplement the job description, they should be limited in number (three to five) and developed only for major job tasks or projects to be undertaken. Concentrating on a limited number of objectives allows for greater personal development and productivity improvement, with a focus on problem-solving actions and innovations.

Challenging: Good performance objectives imply significant results. They require some stretch, as they represent improvements over past performance.

Realistic: Although meaningful performance objectives require stretch and are expressed in terms of improvement, they should still be reasonably attainable. Objectives that ask for too much can be demotivating and will likely be forgotten or discarded, and thus will have no impact.

Consistent: Performance objectives should have target or completion dates, and not just be directed at the “future.” While performance appraisal is an annual process, performance objectives can be set for less than one year.

Flexible: Performance objectives should be somewhat flexible in order to accommodate shifts in business conditions or other unforeseen circumstances. Some can be dropped or modified; others can be added. Time schedules might require change. Although objectives are commitments to action, they should not be too restrictive or rigid.

Measurable: Performance objectives should be measurable and verifiable in accordance with quantitative and/or qualitative standards. It is important that employee and supervisor agree on the levels of results and how these will be measured. These criteria for measurement should be agreed upon when the performance objectives are written. (We will look at measurement in more detail next).

Several sample performance objectives (shown on the next page) should provide some guidance on how the above model can be applied in practice.
EXAMPLES OF PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

RESULT COMMITMENTS

1. Improve quality performance in the field organization.

2. Reduce maintenance costs in XYZ department.

3. Achieve improved economies in internal mail service, while still maintaining efficient processing and deliveries.

4. Install an improved accounting system that provides a running analysis of services by user, organization, and service function.

5. Decrease the average collection period for insurance claims.

6. Develop a computerized estimating program.

7. Hire four sales representatives.

8. Complete XYZ project.

9. Improve the safety record.

10. Move the program for the new product from “exploratory” to “market development” status.

STANDARDS

1. a) By the end of FY . . .
   b) Waste/re-work not to exceed X%

2. a) Define preventative maintenance program by (date)
   b) Reduce maintenance overtime by X% by (date)
   c) Reduce costs by Y% (date)

3. a) X% cost reduction by (date)
    b) Minimal user complaints

4. a) By (date)
    b) Timely availability of accurate information for making valid decisions

5. a) By (date)
    b) From 15 to 20 months.

6. a) By (date)
    b) Projected accuracy to be within X% of historical costs.

7. a) By (date)
    b) In accordance with specified requirements.

8. a) By (date)
    b) Completed within budget and in accordance with established quality, safety, and operating performance standards.

9. a) X% reduction in recordable cases, as defined by OSHA, by (date)
    b) Lost workday cases frequency rate on OSHA standards of Y% by (date).
    c) Z% reduction of property and asset loss in FY . . .

10. a) New contracts signed by (date)
    b) At least two new customers signed up by (date)
    c) Identify near-term sales potential of at least X per year.
It is essential that the employee and the supervisor/manager agree on the objectives that are set for the employee (whatever they are). Agreeing on the objectives means agreeing on the commitment to the result and the standard by which that result will be measured—especially how the standards will be measured against varying levels of performance. You should come to agreement on how these standards will be measured during the performance-planning stage so that you avoid misunderstandings and surprises during the entire performance review period, and particularly at the end.

In some cases, you can actually specify exact standards required for each level of performance, as the examples on the previous page indicate.
3.10 Developing Meaningful Measures

“Nothing that cannot get measured gets managed.” A goal that can’t be measured will be vague, unspecific, intangible, or just plain confusing. Obviously, it will not be achieved—and if it is, nobody will even know about it. You have to have a way to measure every individual goal—an appropriate way to describe the area in which you want to make progress. You should be able to apply the measure immediately, as well as tomorrow or in the future—and see whether there is a difference in performance.

People often see measurement as something far more complicated than it really is, so they end up with a complex method that might not fit the situation at hand. Goals can only be measured in a few limited areas. The four most popular ones are:

- Quality
- Quantity
- Cost
- Timeliness

Whether the goal is personal or for a team or entire organization, these four categories should cover almost all measurement possibilities. For example, consider this complex goal:

“Acquire another business next year that will give our organization new distribution channels in Asia.”

The quality of a business acquisition can be measured, as can its quantitative size, the cost to purchase it, and its profitability by the end of next year. In the final analysis, however, goals can only be measured in simple numeric or “countable” terms—something countable to the person in administration who is asked to “increase sales by 10%.” They are unlikely to be able to measure this today or tomorrow, and more importantly, might have little or no influence on how this is to be done.

On the next page, you will find four simple objectives that can be adopted by an organization. How many of the four measures can be applied to each one? (Answers are shown upside-down at the foot of the page.)
**MEASURABLE GOALS**

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<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>TIMELINESS</th>
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<td>1. Process all mortgage applications accurately in no more than 72 hours from date of receipt.</td>
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<td>2. Eliminate all waste by the end of the year.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Favorably re-negotiate all transportation contracts within six months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Limit units per month.</td>
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</table>

Check every factor in the columns to the right that could be measured for each of these four goals.
Many individuals and organizations fall into the trap of believing that once a measure has been applied, it’s just a matter of watching progress. Unfortunately, they are skipping a very important step in goal-setting—*Are we measuring the right things?* The leadership writer Warren Bennis described the difference between management and leadership this way:

> “Management is climbing the rungs of the ladder as fast as we can. Leadership is making sure that the ladder is leaning against the right wall.”

It is much more important to focus on the right goal than to measure fantastic performance in the wrong area. History is littered with stories of heroic efforts to achieve certain goals that were later discovered to be the wrong objectives in the first place.

For example, a goal to “spend more time with my children next year and develop our relationship” might not achieve the objective if I simply double the amount of time spent in their company but continue to just watch T.V. or work in the same room. This may sound obvious, but organizations are often guilty of applying the wrong yardstick much of the time: Costs are cut at the expense of revenue opportunity, cycle time is reduced at the expense of quality, or quality is improved at the expense of profits.

You have to be very careful to measure the right things.
3.11 Going for Stretching Targets

We have been focusing on relatively procedural aspects of goal-setting. However, the most influential factor in achieving goals and objectives is the use of our imagination to provide the motivation that we need to succeed.

We all know that to succeed at anything, you need motivation. We talk about motivation in sports and can often recognize when an athlete is “motivated” to achieve a target or goal (and when they are not). Most theorists agree that motivation is heavily influenced by an individual’s ability to imagine the “win” or imagine achieving their goal: to vividly project a mental picture of what it will look, sound, smell, and feel like to have achieved an outcome. If this future image is powerful enough, it will not only catalyze our current actions, but maintain our enthusiasm when times are tough.

It will be easier to set achievable goals if you can imagine yourself with the pay-offs or benefits of achieving each goal. This “immersion” process means taking time out to picture this future state. Ideally, this will be a slow, careful reflective process that can be re-conjured at will. Of course, if you can’t picture the future state or can’t see any pay-offs or benefits at all, your goal might not be the right goal or might need substantial re-working.

Stretch targets can be extremely problematic: If the target is too easy, people might reach it too quickly and lose motivation to pace themselves. If it is too stretching, people might think it is unattainable and give up before they start. The golden rule is simple.

“Make sure your targets are just out of reach, but not out of sight.”

This simply means that the target, scoreboard, or capacity to know how you are doing must be close enough to visualize, so you will want to keep going.
3.12 Tracking Performance

Even well-constructed “stretch” targets are not much good if they are only committed to memory and then quickly forgotten. For all but the most simple goals, it is better to develop a basic written system to monitor your performance in general.

This system might involve developing a one-page list of targets attached to each of your goals. However, a far better approach is to draw your targets on charts or graphs, which can then be used to measure or plot your performance.

A picture tells a thousand words; a chart such as this one provides rich information at a glance.

Similar charts can be easily and quickly developed for quality goals, team goals, marketing goals, production goals, and research goals. Even relatively difficult goals around subjects like profitability can be drawn on a graph with a little creativity.

Tracking your performance means more than updating your newly designed charts or graphs. Each day, say to yourself, *What can I do today to get one step closer to achieving my goals?* In simple terms, **focus on your goals each day**, as opposed to allowing yourself to become distracted or drawn into activities that do not necessarily help you to succeed or attain a particular target. In large organizations, activity levels are often confused with effective performance.
So you are focusing each day on taking a step toward your goal. Now you should plan to **review it formally** at least once a week in order to track actual performance. In a situation where you have multiple goals, be sure you reach milestones or go about things progressively. It really helps to imagine how soon each goal can be reached. If this path or route forward can be mentally planned, it will translate your plans into real action.

The final step in tracking your performance is to **record your accomplishments.**

Accomplishments demonstrate the things that people have actually achieved during the period being measured or reviewed. Work accomplishments represent evidence of some impact you’ve made as a result of employing a problem-solving effort.

An accomplishment is something that, by your own standards (or as stated by others), you know you did well. It is an achievement that brought you a sense of gratification. Any activity can be accurately termed an “accomplishment” if it fulfills one or more of the following conditions:

- You achieved greater results than previously with the same resources (budget, people, or equipment, for example).
- You improved operations or made things easier or better than they were before.
- You resolved a problem or panic situation with little or no increase in time, energy, money, or people.
- You brought about something new and perhaps different.

To probe more deeply into your accomplishments over the last year, ask yourself the following questions. Did I:

- See a problem, opportunity, or challenge for which I took the initiative to create a solution?
- Develop something?
- Create or design a new program, procedure, plan, service, or product?
- Identify a need for a new program, procedure, plan, service, or product?
- Prepare an original report, paper, or document?
- Make a direct technical contribution?
- Create or implement an administrative/procedural improvement?
- Participate actively in a major decision related to organizational changes (hiring, salary, new projects, etc.)?
- Implement or participate in a sales, profit-generating, or cost-saving recommendation?
Regardless of the approach you use to write them, effective accomplishment statements have five things in common:

1. They state what action you took to improve a situation.
2. They express how that action benefited the organization in one of five ways:
   - **Cost savings:** Actual money or percentage of expenditure saved
   - **Improved efficiency/productivity:** Time saved, better procedures, reduction in staff
   - **Improved quality:** Physical product or process quality improvements
   - **Project timelines vs. plan:** Delivery vs. plan, commitment, schedule, target
   - **Increased revenues:** New business generated, increased sales or profits
3. They state the result of your action in numerical or percentage terms, whenever possible.
4. They begin with an action verb in the past tense.
5. They are limited to one or two sentences, if possible.

Sometimes you will need to approximate a numerical result or make an estimation. You want to illustrate the point that you made a difference; if necessary, use a truthful ballpark estimate. However, **estimates should be the exception rather than the rule.** For example: “I computerized manual reports for the human resources area, which cut preparation time by six months and cut clerical support to 20% of that previously required.”

The kind of results most frequently expressed in accomplishments are shown in the list below. However, always remember that these values still require a quantitative measurement to substantiate them:

- Improved quality
- Improved productivity and teamwork
- Increased sales
- Reduced time of operation
- Reduced costs
- Achieved a technological breakthrough
- Increased profits
- Established an administrative process
- Improved employee relations
- Planned a program from inception
- Surpassed established standards
- Developed skills

When you have decided on which accomplishments you are going to use in your Performance Appraisal and what skills, competencies, and traits you want each statement to illustrate, you will probably need to rewrite the statements before you finalize them.
3.13 Accomplishment Statements—Getting Started

When trying to decide what sorts of job activities can be considered accomplishments, we suggest that you refer to the following list of questions.

Did the activity:

- Meet the agreed-on target, or even surpass it?
- Achieve more with the same resources?
- Achieve the same results with fewer resources?
- Improve operations or make things easier and better? (quantify whenever possible)
- Resolve a critical problem or situation with little or no increase in time, energy, money, people, etc.?
- Involve a new undertaking, such as computerizing an inventory?
- Surpass accepted standards for quality and/or quantity of performance?

And you can probe even more deeply by examining these questions:

- Did you take the initiative in confronting any problems, opportunities, or challenges?
- Did you develop something?
- Did you create or design a program, procedure, or plan?
- Did you identify a need for a plan, program, product, service, etc.?
- Did you prepare any original reports, papers, or documents?
- Did you participate in any technical contributions?
- Did you implement any administrative or procedural recommendations?
- Did you implement or participate in any sales/profit/cost-saving recommendations?
- Did you receive an award or letter of commendation?

**ACTION VERBS**

On the next page, we have listed a variety of verbs that will be useful in describing the action you took for your own accomplishment statements. Review them as you think through and create your specific statements.
### ACTION VERBS FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

| Accelerated | Directed | Learned | Redesigned | Supervised |
| Accomplished | Doubled | Led | Reduced | Systematized |
| Achieved | Earned | Maintained | Reorganized | Terminated |
| Administered | Edited | Managed | Researched | Traced |
| Analyzed | Eliminated | Maximized | Reviewed | Tracked |
| Approved | Engineered | Minimized | Revised | Traded |
| Assessed | Established | Motivated | Saved | Trained |
| Budgeted | Evaluated | Negotiated | Scheduled | Transferred |
| Built | Expanded | Nurtured | Serviced | Transformed |
| Completed | Forecast | Operated | Set up | Translated |
| Conceived | Formulated | Organized | Simplified | Trimmed |
| Conducted | Founded | Originated | Sold | Tripled |
| Consolidated | Generated | Performed | Solved | Uncovered |
| Controlled | Headed | Planned | Sparked | Unearthed |
| Converted | Implemented | Presented | Staffed | Unified |
| Coordinated | Improved | Processed | Started | Unraveled |
| Created | Improvised | Produced | Streamlined | Used |
| Cut | Increased | Programmed | Strengthened | Vacated |
| Delegated | Innovated | Promoted | Stressed | Verified |
| Delivered | Installed | Proposed | Stretched | Widened |
| Demonstrated | Instituted | Provided | Structured | Withdrew |
| Designed | Introduced | Purchased | Succeeded | Won |
| Developed | Invented | Recommended | Summarized | Worked |
| Devised | Launched | Recruited | Superseded | Wrote |
Module Three: Setting Performance Objectives

3.14 Agreeing on the Competencies that Are the Most Useful/Relevant

So far in this section, we have looked at the general philosophy behind setting goals and objectives and focused specifically on describing individual tasks or projects that we can measure and ultimately appraise. However, we can also set personal-development goals that help both the enterprise and the individual to grow. This is most usefully done by jointly developing job or role competencies.

In contrast to performance objectives that look at assigning clearly describable tasks or projects and that focus specifically on results, competencies have to do with how employees obtain results and what personal skills, attitudes, and behaviors are likely to be most successful for the individual and the enterprise. Thus, competencies help us make sure that the method used to accomplish short-term results will not negatively impact on other people or on long-term results. Individual objectives and competencies should be fully aligned with the organization’s overall objectives and competencies.

The competencies that are jointly identified for personal development help individuals to achieve better results, whatever the job. The manager and the individual absolutely must agree on which particular competencies are likely to be the most relevant and the most appropriate, given the task objectives and challenges that lie ahead.

The Janus Performance Management System’s library of thirty-six competencies can describe most jobs in most types of enterprises. Of course, each job will have its own unique competencies; we suggest at least three competencies be jointly selected for each role, up to ten (seven or eight is the average number of “the most important” competencies).

These finally chosen competencies help employees understand how they are expected to achieve results and help their manager to coach them to enhance their performance. Competencies help provide continuing improvement and development for employees, which will ultimately improve overall results for the entire enterprise.

Module 11 of the Janus Performance Management System contains a complete description of all thirty-six generic competencies.

IDENTIFYING THE “RIGHT” COMPETENCIES

Before we can look at the whole process of identifying the “right” competencies in a performance management situation, it is important to establish a simple definition of a competency. A competency can be simply suggested to be:

“Any identifiable skill or behavior that an individual can successfully demonstrate or apply”

In sports, we readily recognize the competencies of speed, strength, agility, and even mental attitude. We can tell which athletes have these attributes and which ones don’t. The same principles apply in a business situation, but in this case the competencies that are deemed to be more important are more likely to be things like “organizational skills,” “levels of creativity,” or “decision-making ability.”
Each of us has some existing natural competencies which we are extremely proficient at, but they are only useful if we can apply these competencies in the job that we are asked to perform. For example, a bench chemist or filing clerk might have little opportunity to apply their natural competency in communication. It is important to identify those competencies that are going to most help the enterprise and the individual to succeed in the short- and the long-term. We don’t want to just select competencies in which we are already relatively strong.

In general, the competencies that should be jointly selected by manager and employee will come from one of two sources:

1. Competencies that are deemed to be generally important to the organization (customer service, quality focus, teamwork, etc.).
2. Competencies that are deemed to be specifically important to performing the current job role successfully or that will be needed to achieve the task or project objectives that have been set. (These include competencies such as analytical ability, attention to detail, or empathy).

The Janus Performance Management System helps the manager and the employee to review what the “right” competencies are for the enterprise and for individual growth, development, and success by describing in detail a list of thirty-six competencies.

Although it is possible to generate many more competencies than this, extensive research suggests that these thirty-six competencies can cover over 90% of all individual job roles and particular task objectives that can be set. Hence, this list is an ideal starting point for a manager and individual to agree on which competencies are likely to be the most significant and useful to focus on throughout the appraisal cycle in the year ahead.

THE COMPETENCY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

The process to identify the right competencies for a particular person in a particular situation will obviously be unique in each set of circumstances. Nevertheless, it would be helpful to have a common process that can be adopted by the manager/supervisor and the employee:

1. Review the entire list of thirty-six competencies described in Module 11 of this manual. This module defines what a competency is all about and provides a list of questions to discover how proficient an individual is likely to be in a competency area.
2. Make a rough list of those competencies that are likely to be most useful to the individual employee in performing their day-to-day job role in the year ahead.
3. Add to your list any additional competencies that you think might be needed as a result of particular tasks or projects that are likely to form part of the objectives that will be set to be achieved.
4. Add to your list any competencies that reflect an overall enterprise-wide thrust to develop employee competence as a whole.
5. Try to keep your list of competencies somewhere between three and ten (aim at an average of between six and eight competencies).
6. Prioritize this list, from the highest to the lowest priority.

The individual employee should follow exactly the same process as the one used by the manager/supervisor.
The manager/supervisor and employee should together work on how to undertake the following steps:

1. Review each other’s final draft lists of chosen competencies in their respective priority order, and look for common choices and priorities as well as obvious differences.
2. Openly discuss the reasons for the choices (particularly the high-priority ones) and the rationale for their inclusion.
3. Agree on a final list of 6–8 competencies that both parties are comfortable with.
4. Discuss the implications that the final list of competencies is likely to generate, and what efforts need to be made to achieve any targets that are set.

Once a final list has been identified, the Janus System allows the manager/supervisor and the individual employee to generate an electronic questionnaire online, and then undertake an assessment of current proficiency (from the individual’s perspective and that of the manager/supervisor). This might prove to be a useful means of accurately establishing the proficiency gap at the beginning of the appraisal cycle and thereby set personal development objectives. It is also a useful way to make a comparative judgment in terms of progress made toward the end of the appraisal cycle when the electronic assessment is taken again.

GUIDELINES FOR ADDING A COMPETENCY

The thirty-six competencies described with the Janus System will be sufficient for most jobs, but you might want to identify an additional competency that you now believe is critical for success in a specific job. For example, in an accountant’s job, perhaps “data-gathering skills” will be important.

When you feel it’s necessary to add a competency, be sure to:

1. Define the competency clearly and concisely.
2. Define specific observable behaviors of employees who demonstrate the competency effectively.
3. Define specific observable behaviors that are likely to occur when employees do not demonstrate the competency effectively.
4. Define specific things employees can do to develop the competency or improve their performance in the future.
5. Make sure that all employees who are in the job know about the additional competency at the beginning of the performance period.

Double-check to see if it makes sense to add a competency. Ask yourself:

- Is the new competency directly related to performance outcomes/results?
- Is the competency important for success in the job role?
- Is the new competency clearly different from an existing competency or a combination of the competencies?
- Will the competency help you to describe what distinguishes the best performers from other performers?
The Janus Performance Management System

- Does the competency represent the *how* of getting the job done successfully vs. describing the task or the *what*?
- Can you list several real-life examples of how demonstrating this competency contributes to successful results?
- Can you easily develop a clear understanding of what the competency is, how it can be demonstrated, and why it is important to the achievement of results?

Once you have considered all of these questions, you can add any additional competencies in a format that is similar to the ones that are shown in Module 11.
Module Three: Setting Performance Objectives

3.15 Conducting an Objective-Setting Discussion
Now that we have looked at the general background to setting task or project goals and objectives and looked at how to set personal objectives through the collaborative development of appropriate competencies, we finally need to look briefly at how an objective-setting meeting or discussion between the manager and the individual should be best handled.

WHAT IS THIS DISCUSSION?
The objective-setting discussion takes place at the beginning of the performance appraisal cycle. Again, at this meeting the appraisee and appraiser develop the individual’s performance objectives for the year and identify the specifically selected competencies that will be particularly important for achieving good results on performance objectives.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS DISCUSSION
This discussion will help to:

- Integrate the enterprise or department’s objectives with Individual Performance Objectives.
- Mutually agree on specific performance objectives and on the results expected.
- Discuss and negotiate differences of opinion regarding challenging yet realistic performance objectives.
- Select the competencies that will most influence results on each performance objective.
- Discuss individual strengths and development needs related to the chosen competencies.
- Discuss Action Plans and next steps needed to accomplish performance objectives and to demonstrate the chosen competencies.

Hence, the objective or accountability-setting discussion lays a strong foundation for the employee and their manager to work together in a collaborative way, helping the individual to grow and succeed in their personal goals and helping the enterprise to achieve successful outcomes at the end of the appraisal cycle.
PREPARING FOR THE DISCUSSION
Before the discussion, each participant in the discussion can do these things to prepare:

- Review the relevant Position Description to identify which responsibilities will be most critical for the current performance period.
- Identify priorities and/or special projects needed for the current year—review the big picture.
- Review the ongoing job responsibilities.
- Think about additional performance objectives that would enhance the department's performance or the individual's results.
- Identify particular competencies related to accomplishing these performance objectives, and ways the employee can demonstrate each competency in practical terms.
- Think about Action Plans needed to achieve performance objectives and to develop competencies.
- Review each proposed performance objective and compare it with any previous performance that has been experienced.

Both the manager and the appraisee should constantly remember that preparation always takes time. It is therefore not appropriate to try to prepare for an objective-setting discussion a few minutes before an event is due to occur. Nor is it appropriate to squeeze any preparation into a few minutes between other priority activities that are commanding more of your focus or attention. You should give yourself several days of lead time, and put at least an hour aside to think quietly and to make some well-considered notes.
GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING THE DISCUSSION

The following steps will help both parties to conduct effective objective-setting discussions. In addition, the Coaching sections (Modules 4, 5, and 6) of the Janus System provide skills that will help the supervisor to conduct a participative, productive discussion.

Steps for the supervisor:

1. Set the stage

   Thank the individual for preparing the session and for setting aside this time.

   Review the importance of this discussion for:
   - Reaching understanding and acceptance of performance objectives.
   - Discussing the selected competencies that will be the most important for achieving results during the performance cycle.
   - Continuing to develop the employee’s knowledge and skills.

   Review the agenda/session objectives:
   - Come to mutual understanding and acceptance on performance objectives and competencies.
   - Identify Action Plans and next steps.

2. Ask the individual for his/her ideas on key performance objectives and selected competencies for the upcoming performance cycle.

3. Introduce your ideas on key performance objectives and competencies. Negotiate any differences and come to mutual understanding.

4. Identify any Action Plans or next steps needed to accomplish performance objectives and to develop and demonstrate competencies in the future.

5. Document agreed-upon performance objectives and competencies. You might wish to use the Periodic Progress Review Form (or another form preferred by your team) to record understanding and acceptance of performance objectives and competencies. Include in your documentation any agreed-upon Action Plans or next steps.

   A form will help you and the employee monitor and discuss progress during informal coaching discussions or during periodic Progress Reviews. Give a copy of the form to the employee.

6. Express confidence in the individual’s abilities and end the discussion. Thank the employee for his/her active participation and encourage him/her to come to you whenever he/she has questions about their performance objectives.
For the individual appraisee:

1. **Prepare thoughts for the interview session.**

2. **Approach the discussion in a positive frame of mind.**
   
   The discussion is primarily to improve individual, team, and enterprise performance—it should therefore have a constructive focus on the future.

3. **Be as open as possible in the discussion and do not become defensive.**
   
   Be ready to provide as much detail as necessary.

4. **Stick to the facts as much as possible.**
   
   Although subjective comments are a necessary part of the appraisal system, the more we focus on the facts, the more constructive and positive the debate is likely to be.

5. **Work with your manager to reach a mutual agreement.**
   
   This should include the final draft objectives that are discussed and any competencies that both parties see to be important.
HANDLING PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS

If a proposed performance objective is set too low:

- Probe to understand the reasons why the employee has set the performance objective so low.
- Try to identify obstacles that the employee feels stand in the way of better performance or of meeting a tighter deadline.
- Work with the employee to develop ways to overcome these obstacles (for example, by demonstrating a specific competency).
- If appropriate, offer additional resources or extra assistance to help the employee set and achieve a more challenging performance objective.
- After considering the obstacles and the resources needed to overcome the obstacles, reevaluate whether the performance objective is really too easy.

If the appraisee proposes a performance objective that is unrealistic:

- Ask him/her to explain the Action Plan in more detail.
- Probe for more information to see if any estimates or resource requirements are overly optimistic or unrealistic.
- Probe for reasons why the employee thinks he/she can achieve the Action Plan (especially if it’s in a new area or in an area in which he/she has previously been unsuccessful).
- Look for unrealistic assumptions about availability of supplies, equipment, support services, and people (including the cooperation needed from people in other departments).
- Based on your discussion, reconsider whether the performance objective is actually unrealistic. If it is, mutually agree on a more realistic performance objective. Remember to let the employee know that you appreciate his/her willingness to attempt a difficult performance objective, and explain how important it is to set a challenging but realistic performance objective.

If the appraisee disagrees with the performance objective but the objective is important for accomplishing organizational objectives:

- Restate his/her perception of the situation, clearly linking the objectives to overall company objectives.
- Show empathy, but state that you need his/her acceptance of the performance objective as you proposed it in order to meet the needs of the business.
- Remember that you have ultimate responsibility for the performance objective, and you have the authority (where this applies) to make the final decision (and that you are comfortable with this).
GUIDELINES FOR SETTING PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Keep the following points in mind as you work with your employees to set performance objectives:

- Performance objectives are not carved in stone. They can be revised if situations, plans, or priorities change. Performance objectives and the specific competencies for achieving these performance objectives are discussed at the beginning of the performance cycle. However, performance objectives are often redefined as the year progresses to reflect changes in unit priorities, operating requirements, changes in individual assignments, promotions, and other business conditions. You and your employees must be ready to revise performance objectives and related competencies when circumstances are beyond the control of the employee and/or unit.

- Performance objectives can state what is wanted. (Report will be submitted by 11:00 A.M. each day) or what is not wanted (Overtime costs for this year will not exceed last year’s overtime costs).

- Ask employees to develop Action Plans for achieving complex or difficult performance objectives.

Performance objectives will have high importance if:

- Successful performance of the job responsibility or performance objective has important implications for organizational performance or the stakes are high—such as safety, profits, costs, customer relations.

- The performance of other employees will be negatively affected if the job responsibility is not performed well or if the performance objective is not met.

- The employee has previously performed this job responsibility poorly. This is especially critical if the poor results negatively impacted the employee’s overall job performance.

Your discussion should answer the following questions for your employees:

- What should I accomplish, by when? (What are my performance objectives?)

- How will I accomplish it? (What competencies are necessary in order to demonstrate or achieve good results?)

- How will my manager and I know if I’ve successfully accomplished each performance objective and successfully demonstrated each appropriate competency? (What will be “evidence” of doing a good job?)

- What are my manager’s/supervisor’s priorities?

It should always be remembered that a discussion on setting performance objectives is a two-way process that should be conducted in the most positively collaborative way possible. Although every discussion will be unique, the “do’s” and “don’t’s” on the next page should help keep this discussion on track.
3.16 Supervisor’s/Manager’s Checklist for Setting Performance Objectives

**DO**

- Tie individual objectives to the objectives of the organizational unit, of the department, and of the company.
- Set the objectives jointly and let the appraisee know that objectives can be revised if the situation changes.
- Gather information so you can set the objectives at the appropriate developmental level.
- Develop specific, measurable objectives that are challenging yet realistic.
- Set a manageable number of objectives; discuss the importance of each objective and prioritize importance.
- Discuss the competencies the individual will need in order to demonstrate or achieve performance objectives.
- Ask individuals to suggest Action Plans for achieving complex objectives.
- Set checkpoints to review progress on objectives.
- Agree up front on the criteria for successful achievement of objectives.
- Use a process for periodic Progress Reviews: keep a written record of objectives, Action Plans, and progress discussions.
- Set objectives to improve future performance.
- Keep developmental needs in mind when you set objectives.
- Gain the appraisee’s understanding and acceptance on each performance objective and competency.

**DON’T**

- Don’t set objectives without looking at the big picture.
- Don’t hand an individual a copy of his/her objectives without discussing them.
- Don’t set objectives that are too easy or too difficult under the circumstances.
- Don’t develop general or vague objectives.
- Don’t set too many objectives or set trivial objectives.
- Don’t set complex performance objectives without discussing how the individual plans to achieve the objectives.
- Don’t ignore the “how” of achieving performance objectives.
- Don’t assume that objectives can be set and then forgotten until the Summary and Development discussions at the end of the appraisal cycle.
- Don’t assume that the appraisee can read their supervisor’s mind or know what’s important to the company.
- Don’t rely on memory.
- Don’t be overly critical of the individual appraisee’s past performance when setting objectives.
- Don’t forget that continuous employee development is an important outcome of the Janus performance and development system.
- Don’t accept performance objectives that will not lead to continuous improvement or that will not meet the performance objectives to which the individual is held accountable.
3.17 Summary
This module of the Janus Performance Management System has suggested that effective goal-setting (at the very important beginning of the appraisal process) is essentially done through these four steps:

- Prepare carefully.
- Organize resources and written goals.
- Act on objectives through the use of measures and targets.
- Monitor progress, and persevere.

The time and effort to be spent in these stages is like a pyramid:

![Pyramid Diagram]

However, the pyramid of effort is ideally completely reversed:

![Reversed Pyramid Diagram]

This does not mean that you will not spend much of your time in Action and in progress monitoring. It merely suggests that the better and clearer the goals at preparation time and the more thinking that goes into resources and communication of the goals, the easier the process will be to actually attain your goals. Of course, as ever, “practice makes perfect.”
Although it is one of the hardest things to master, giving and receiving performance feedback is critical to making sure that the whole performance management experience is positive and constructive for the employee, and ultimately valuable for the entire enterprise.
Module Four
Giving and Receiving Performance Feedback

4.1 Introduction
4.2 The “Art” of Giving and Receiving Feedback
4.3 Your Communication Style
4.4 Creating a Positive Intent
4.5 Sticking to Your Observations
4.6 Recognizing the Behavior/Action Impact
4.7 Focusing on the Consequences of Feedback
4.8 Listening to the Other Person’s Response
4.9 Collaboratively Discussing Solutions
4.10 Focusing on the Content
4.11 Listening Calmly and Attentively, and Clarifying the Message
4.12 Acknowledging the Concerns
4.13 Avoiding Defensiveness or Over-Explaining
4.14 Welcoming Suggestions about the Future
4.15 360-Degree Feedback
4.16 Summary
Module Four
Giving and Receiving Performance Feedback

4.1 Introduction
Being able to give and receive performance feedback is critical to making sure that the whole performance management experience is positive and constructive for the employee, and ultimately valuable for the entire enterprise.

This module in the Janus Performance Management System will explore the subject of feedback in detail.

Before we begin talking about the “art” of giving and receiving performance feedback, however, review this list of questions that must be answered by anyone who is in the position of judging another person’s progress or performance:

- **Is this the right time and place?** Feedback is best delivered out of the range of other people and when the receiver is not under pressure. There might be times when it’s best to leave the conversation for later, but don’t delay for too long. Feedback is most effective when delivered while the behavior to be discussed is still fresh in everyone’s mind.

- **Will the other person find the feedback useful?** If the feedback can’t be used by the other person to improve, why say it? Be careful not to give feedback when its only purpose is to make you feel superior or give you a target for your frustration.

- **Do you have the right information?** If you offer feedback based on incomplete or inaccurate information, it’s unlikely to be effective. It will also be seen as disrespectful.

- **Does it help the other person see himself or herself more clearly?** This is best done through a conversation, rather than delivered as a lecture. Hence, rather than jumping straight in, you should ideally explain what you’d like to talk about.

- **Is the gain bigger than the possible pain? Is the feedback worthwhile?** Keep the constructive criticism for the important things that benefit the team, department, or organization as a whole.
## 4.2 The “Art” of Giving and Receiving Feedback

Most of us bristle at the prospect of criticism, so it is also important to reassure the other person that you’re not hassling them, but rather trying to help. In simple terms, this means taking the following approach:

- **Describe the behavior.** Be specific—do not put someone down or be vague. State the facts as you see them.

- **Avoid loaded terms that produce emotional reactions and raise defenses.** Be specific and use clear examples rather than vague generalizations. If you say to someone “You’re always late” they can avoid the central issue by arguing that “always” is not strictly true. Rather, “You were 10 minutes late on Monday, and 30 minutes late on Wednesday. Is there some reason for this behavior?”

- **Explain the consequences.** You also need to describe what happened as a result. Again, the key is to stick to the facts, rather than sit in judgment (e.g., “We need to have a full staff in order to open the area for security and customer service.”).

- **Build on the other person’s strengths.** You can help the other person keep the feedback in perspective by including positive comments about their overall behavior (e.g., “Your overall performance is one of good teamwork and general punctuality. However, there seem to be these occasional diversions from an otherwise good performance.”).

- **Invite the other person to respond.** Think of feedback as a way of helping people to explore their behavior and see for themselves what needs to be done. You should resist the temptation to tell individuals directly what they should or shouldn’t do. The usual response to direct advice is often rejection, resentment, denial, or argument. A better approach is to avoid telling people what they should do, but rather invite them to develop their own action plan (e.g., “Is there some way you could work toward 100% punctuality?”).

All this takes practice, and the ability to communicate develops over time. We will explore the whole process of giving and receiving feedback in a lot more detail in this module.
4.3 Your Communication Style

Every appraising manager or supervisor needs to recognize that each of us has our own style of communicating and giving feedback. For some, it’s a very formal style, no matter what the situation is: We can’t “loosen up” when we’re dealing with high-powered people in a business environment or talking with our kids. Others prefer a laughing “jokey” style that is very entertaining and engaging in some circumstances, but out of line at other times. Luckily, most of us are able to fairly quickly assess the style that is appropriate for particular circumstances, and we can thus adapt our natural communication style to it. We have found through experience what works and what doesn’t work. But no matter how astute we are at adapting our personal communication style to different situations, it’s always there shaping the conversations we have.

Our personal communication style is heavily influenced by how we prefer to engage with other people. Some people are internally focused (introverted) and prefer to work through problems before speaking about them. They’re happy to work on their own, and often avoid group activities. When they’re in a meeting, they will tend to “hang back” unless they feel they have something really important to say. They prefer to think through what they’re going to say in advance, which can create some difficulties in face-to-face communication because if the conversation moves away from the “script,” introverted people might not be comfortable with the flow.

More outgoing (extroverted) people are focused externally. When they have a problem or issue that they’re trying to deal with, they will very quickly “share” it with others. They are comfortable in meetings, tending to work things out by talking them through as the ideas occur to them. This can create some problems in giving face-to-face feedback because this type often appears to be “shooting first and asking questions later” (but they’re not). Introverts often think extroverts talk too much because they don’t understand these style differences. Extroverts, on the other hand, tend to wonder if introverts are doing much thinking.

It is important to recognize these different styles of communication when engaging in performance feedback of any sort as a feedback-giver or a feedback-receiver. This allows you to adjust your approach in each situation in which you find yourself.

Our values and beliefs can also very powerfully shape our communication style, because they underpin the way we think about things—even the way we “see” things in the first place. Values and beliefs are shaped by our upbringing, religion, socio-economic factors (rich or poor), education, politics, and so forth. When we’re talking with someone, we need to think about whether our values and beliefs are putting a “spin” on the conversation that is not helpful to good communication. This is particularly important in feedback situations, because the person to whom we are talking will see any outward signs of values or beliefs as a contextual part of the overall message that we are giving.

Our beliefs do shape the way we interact with others, but we also make assumptions about the world in which we live and work. Mostly these assumptions are helpful, because they save us time and effort. By making assumptions, we don’t have to work out the implications of something we do every time we do it. But sometimes our assumptions get in the way. When we communicate, our assumptions can act as very powerful “filters,” blocking out important elements of our conversation. For example, some people’s assumptions about what is “men’s work” and what is “women’s work” can interfere with conversations they are trying to have with people who have different assumptions.
Once again, understanding people’s values and beliefs and taking these into account in performance feedback discussions will significantly improve the quality of the conversation.

We have a personal or vested interest in most conversations, so there will usually be a level of emotional energy connected to them. Emotional energy in a conversation might focus on passion or anger or commitment, but sometimes we try to avoid showing strong emotion, and consequently come across as not caring. When we are communicating face-to-face (particularly in a feedback conversation), our emotional energy can powerfully help or hinder the conversation, depending on whether it is appropriate or not.

To be able to communicate most effectively with other people, you need to be able to match your style to the goals of the conversation. A conversation about possibilities and future plans will require a different communication style than will a counseling conversation. Explaining a complex aspect of someone’s job should be done in a different style than you use when congratulating them for breaking the monthly sales record. Matching the style used to the conversation you’re having can be a big help in getting your message across.

A good example is giving praise. Often people feel uncomfortable about giving positive feedback, so the style of delivery can appear insincere or incongruent with the words. It is important to back up the verbal message with the non-verbal message. Think about the words you want to use and then actually practice saying them to get some sense of congruence—whether the feedback is positive or negative. You want your words and your tone of voice and body language to express the same thing, whatever it is.
4.4 Creating a Positive Intent

It takes two to tango. It also takes two to communicate. Like good dancing, good feedback-giving is about getting two people involved and responding to each other. Good dancers don’t fight each other or try to win. They would end up treading on each other’s toes or just tripping each other up. If we want to be good communicators, we need to be able to learn from the dancers and cooperate to create a mutually satisfying experience where both sides have a role to play. Of course, if we get feedback going at an individual level, the constant exchange of feedback at an organizational level will help to keep the enterprise on track to meet its goals and remain competitive.

Sometimes people think that the situation they are trying to communicate about is so straightforward, one-way “telling” is all that is needed. The “weight” of feedback might lie heavily with the feedback-giver, but it still must be offered positively and constructively. If you cannot identify a positive reason to give feedback, you should not be giving it! **Feedback is best carried out when there is genuine two-way communication. It should not be a one-way discussion that leaves the individual feeling negative or discouraged.**

If you’re not sure that it’s the right time or place to have a feedback conversation, don’t be afraid to ask the other person if it’s all right for you to talk with them. You’ll usually get a positive answer. If you don’t, at least it allows you to set up a time and place to meet and talk that is mutually convenient.

Let’s say it’s OK with the other person, but you feel that it’s not the right place to be having the conversation you’d like to have. Postpone the meeting! It would be a big mistake to carry on: your feelings of things not being quite right would most likely be picked up by the other person, and that will upset the balance of the whole conversation.

If you don’t think the place is right, suggest moving somewhere else—even going for a walk and talking is better than staying in a place that is not conducive to the flow of the conversation. If it is a performance-management update or end-of-cycle discussion, the manager and the appraisee do not need to sit in an office, where there is a risk of being interrupted or overheard. The bottom line is that if you try to have a serious feedback conversation at the wrong time or in the wrong place, there’s a very good chance that you won’t achieve the desired outcome.

Getting and holding a person’s attention is usually easier if they have some interest in what you want to communicate. “What’s in it for me?” is the question most of us ask as soon as someone wants to talk with us. People busy at work will be more prepared to stop and have a conversation with you if they perceive that “what’s in it for them” is something that is advantageous or important for them to know.

So, how much time do you need for an effective feedback conversation? It depends on what you want to talk about. Think about what you want to achieve, and work out how long it might take; this will help you decide when to have the conversation. Plan to allow enough time to achieve what you want to, but don’t overdo it. Taking an hour to talk about something that should only take a few minutes won’t win you any friends. If you regularly take too long, you might find people “ducking for cover” when they see you coming.
When offering coaching, guidance, or just general feedback, it is important to make sure that your points are related to a specific goal or purpose—not just offered as gratuitous or casual remarks. In an appraisal-type discussion, feedback should be related to personal or departmental objectives. For example, you could say:

“As you know, our goal this year was to handle 15% more volume as a team, and we all had to do our part to achieve this. In the first six months, you have handled 5% less volume than last year—why is this?”

This is factual feedback, specific to the performance concern; it helps relate the shortfall in performance to the wider objective.

Describing specific observations helps the other person understand exactly what you mean and accept it as “real” or valid. There are two separate but equally critical methods involved here: being specific, and focusing on direct observations rather than on opinions or rumors.

General feedback tends to be more confusing than helpful. By being specific, you help the other person identify exactly what your points are. It’s also important to separate what you have actually observed from your opinions or what others have told you. Opinions (especially those not backed up by fact) tend to turn people off or make them defensive; rumors might simply be inaccurate. Starting with facts gives you a common ground on which to build.

Always remember that your reactions to what you have observed can provide very useful information to the other person. Submersed in their own perspective and thought processes, most people can benefit from seeing themselves from another’s perspective. When you describe your actions or the consequences of the observed behaviors, the other person can better appreciate the impact their actions are having on others and on the organization or team as a whole. However, if the feedback is to be beneficial, it must be two-way and not one-way so the “say” of both parties is respected at all times.

After you have described your observations specifically and accurately, you can offer your reactions. Explain the consequences of the other person’s behavior and how you feel about it. Give examples of how you and others are affected. For example, a manager might offer the following feedback to an individual:

“The plan looks good. Every additional pound of waste we reduce contributes to the effectiveness of the operation. This is what can happen when we put our heads together to solve a problem.”

Once you have provided the feedback, give them the opportunity to react to your feedback. It builds their self-esteem and shows that you recognize the value of their ideas or suggestions. Getting the other person’s point of view also creates an opportunity to check for any misunderstandings or misinterpretations. When you provide an opportunity for responses and reactions, you learn valuable information about how things are going, gain a broader perspective, and help to foster open communication.
Gaining respect in a feedback conversation essentially involves encouraging and allowing a healthy two-way flow of ideas and avoiding a number of communication traps or problems that can occur. It also involves using many direct methods or techniques to help the communication process. Over time, the list of methods that work effectively will grow for each feedback-giver. However, in the short term, the following list of suggestions should be helpful.

**THINGS THAT CAN HELP A FEEDBACK CONVERSATION GO WELL**

The following suggestions will help your feedback conversation go smoothly:

- Speak slowly and with an even tempo, offering any feedback points one at a time.
- Avoid talking *at* people—find ways to talk *with* them.
- Don’t ignore people—maintain a healthy connection at all times.
- Never attack, even if you have been attacked.
- Avoid put-downs or patronizing comments.
- Don’t talk over others. Apologize when you do.
- Avoid telling people what is good for them.
- Allow plenty of opportunities for individuals to express their views.
- Encourage the other person to tell you how they feel. Ask them from time to time.
- Hold back on giving advice until you feel that they might be ready to hear it. Ask if you’re not sure: “Do you mind if I give you some advice?”
- Talk less than you listen/listen more than you talk.
- Always try to stay calm when you give feedback.

Several of these approaches can be used in the same discussion. Other techniques can also be added that help to keep the mood positive and the conversation flowing.
4.5 Sticking to Your Observations

An effective feedback-giver has to have good communication skills, but also must understand how to use a range of methods and styles for feedback on performance, as and when appropriate. A large part of this feedback-giving skill is being able to give people highly concrete and specific examples to help them to understand what they can do to improve in the future. Here are some ways to keep your feedback focused and specific:

- **Stick to the facts when offering feedback.** Don’t speculate on motives, conscious or subconscious, and don’t try to be a mind-reader.

- **Keep your voice in a level range.** Don’t let it get out of control (loud volume and wildly changing pitch). Keep calm at all times.

- **Don’t use extreme or loaded words.** Don’t say “crisis” when “situation” will do. Don’t say “bungling and outrageous incompetence” when “mistake” will do. Don’t say “terrible,” “pathetic,” or “disgusting” when “unacceptable” will do.

- **If you do need to express negative feedback, accentuate the positive.** Try to find something good to say along with the bad stuff. With some people, even this is a bit of a challenge, but the trick is to catch them doing something right, and then let them know quickly.

- **If you do need to give some negative feedback, always try to give feedback in private rather than in public.** This is not only good manners, it makes sense. The person receiving the negative feedback can then concentrate on solving problems instead of feeling humiliated or thrown off-balance in front of their peers.

All of these tips help individuals to focus on concrete information and valid observations that have been made. This is a much better approach that seeks to minimize personal or subjective comment, guesses, and assumptions that tend to drag the feedback discussion into disputed territory and take the conversation off-track, when it should be focused on the future.

Someone once said, “If you can fake sincerity, you can fake anything.” We can all smell fake sincerity from about a mile away! It will take a very skillful actor to be able to get away with it—don’t even try.

Actually, most of us are not trying to “fool” people by saying one thing when we mean another. What we are saying just isn’t being backed up by our tone of voice and our body language. If what we’re trying to communicate is very important to us, we tend to be a bit nervous or stressed; when that happens, it’s easy for our words and how we’re saying them to get “out of whack.”

Learning to give feedback by telling stories is a very powerful way to improve your communication. As we’ve indicated before, effective feedback is a two-way process. To make our communication two-way, we have to be able to listen with empathy, and acknowledge what we hear. We have to show that we’ve understood. This doesn’t mean that we have to agree with the other person, but we must acknowledge where they are. Relating a personal experience that speaks to the subject at hand interjects a somewhat lighter tone and becomes an effective way to talk about what worked for you and gives the other person confidence that they can make positive changes.
When engaging in this sort of conversation or any other important conversation, try and put yourself in the other person’s shoes. Ask yourself:

- “Would I respond favorably to this approach?”
- “Would saying it this way get my message through, or not?”
- “How would I react if someone told me that, point blank?”

It is useful to give the other person some context and background to the issues we want to talk about, as well as information that is specific and concrete. Just because you know why it’s important and you know how it got to this stage doesn’t mean the other person will. It might be a nasty shock, or they just might not be able to make enough of a connection to understand why you think it’s important. Always give some background or context, even when the situation seems obvious to you. It might not be so obvious to the other person.

Ultimately, effective feedback-givers avoid using jargon or “gobbledygook” and inappropriate language when getting their message across. They also make sure that their messages are brief and to-the-point as much as possible. The main ways in which to do this are:

- **Always look for plain language alternatives** to technical language. In simple terms, this means keeping your feedback simple, jargon-free, and short (using the shortest words possible).

- **Beware of abstract language** when concrete language is available. Concrete language is specific, while abstract language is general. For example:
  
  *Abstract*: People should have appropriate performance parameters for duplication effort.
  
  *Concrete*: People should be able to produce fifty stapled copies of twenty double-sided sheets in under three minutes with this machine.

- **Avoid using pompous, bureaucratic, or political language.** Here are a few examples, followed by preferable alternatives:

  - accounted for by the fact that (because)
  - accrue (add, gain)
  - at this point in time (now)
  - fully cognizant of the fact that (aware that)
  - in view of the foregoing circumstances (therefore)
  - notwithstanding (even if, despite, still, yet)
  - on two separate occasions (twice)
  - undertake (agree, promise)

- **Use examples, analogies, metaphors**, or graphic or visual communication to explain.

- **Keep your feedback short, relevant, and to-the-point.** Even where you have a lot of feedback to give, break it up into smaller parts and help yourself as well as the other person to remain focused on the key relevant issues.
All individuals experience success and failure. We can look for the causes in a shallow or superficial way, or we can dig deeper to find out what really happened. That deeper digging can be most enlightening, not only for what it reveals about what we have done, but for what it reveals about ourselves as well. Giving effective feedback encourages people to look for the root causes of their successes and failures, and provides observations that focus on the facts and not on the person or on vague behavior guesses and assumptions. This makes the feedback a useful developmental experience.

Why focus on factual observations? Because this will help you avoid a potentially emotional or heated exchange arising as a result of subjective comments. For example, the direct but subjective feedback “You were drunk” is likely to cause an argument or an emotionally charged exchange. However, the statement “You failed to walk in a straight line on that high platform and could have injured yourself or others—that is unacceptable,” is a factual statement. It avoids jumping to the reasons immediately.
4.6 Recognizing the Behavior/Action Impact

For many of us, the most difficult conversations we have are those concerned with giving and receiving feedback, yet everytime we talk to someone about their behavior (or their actions) with the aim of encouraging them to change, we are giving feedback. Another term for feedback is “constructive criticism,” which suggests that we are talking about acceptable and unacceptable behavior. It is a highly subjective topic.

If we know it is subjective and prone to error, we’re often reluctant to give the feedback; after all, we care about the other person’s feelings. Will he feel hurt? Will she be offended? But we also worry about having to deal with the effect of their reaction on ourselves. If he gets angry, how will I deal with it? If she threatens to resign, how will I cope? Fortunately, there are ways of delivering feedback that can help prevent our emotions from boiling over.

Even if we don’t share what we think in words, our behavior tends to give the game away. Disapproval can be expressed with a frown, a sigh, a critical look, and so on. Or we might simply avoid contact. However, the other person knows you disapprove, but doesn’t know why or what to do about it. Don’t just hint or rely on the other person picking up clues. Be clear, express your feedback in full, and engage in open discussion.

We also need to remember that the receiver is often also reluctant to hear feedback. All too easily, we see the feedback as criticism and a threat or a sign that the other person doesn’t like or value us as a person. When this happens, our emotions get in the way and deny us the chance to learn something to our benefit.

There are ways to receive feedback and reduce the risk of over-reacting: We can make sure that both parties work toward a mutual understanding about why the behavior needs to change. This is best done by focusing on the impact or the consequences of the behavior, and then demonstrating that this can be improved with a little effort. Once this is recognized, the whole conversation will become considerably easier.

It will be tempting to offer general remarks, but in the vast majority of cases, it is more helpful for the feedback-giver and the receiver to link individual behaviors (positive and negative) to the wider objectives of the organization. This means that any behavior or action upon which feedback is given must be put into the wider context of why it is important for the behavior to be modified or changed to help the organization as a whole: to advance a particular goal or objective, to better reflect one of the core values, etc. In addition, perhaps the behavior change is to help modify or develop a specific skill or competency that is important to the individual and the enterprise in general.
Here are some things to think about when offering feedback comments in a wider context:

- Will the other person find the feedback useful? Can it make a difference in the development of their skills and competencies?
- Is the gain bigger than the possible pain? In other words, is the feedback worthwhile? Keep your constructive criticism for the important things that benefit the team, department, or organization as a whole.
- Do I understand enough to see how a person’s current performance might detract from overall business performance? Understand first, give feedback second. If you offer feedback based on incomplete or inaccurate information, it’s unlikely to be effective. It will also be seen as disrespectful. (“They didn’t even bother to get their facts right.”)

Don’t forget, all feedback should be provided in a balanced and factual way. Comments should be impersonal and action-focused. It’s not enough just to describe the behavior. You also need to describe what happened as a result. The key is to stick to the facts, not to judge. What you’re doing is giving the other person information he or she might not be aware of.
4.7 Focusing on the Consequences of Feedback

Many feedback conversations are crammed full of information that must be covered in a 30- or even 60-minute meeting all at once. In fact, some feedback-givers see it to be almost their duty to raise a whole range of points on the basis that at least everything has been brought to the person’s attention. (They don’t want to be criticized for not mentioning something). Unfortunately, this cramming approach looks like it is covering a lot of ground, but in the long run it covers very little because most individuals prefer to deal with one or two issues or actions at a time and be successful with these, rather than to try to “juggle” several and find that they can’t improve any of them.

If there are several issues that need to be discussed, the feedback-giver should prioritize the main points and make sure that these are given as much time as necessary for discussion and action planning. After all, if time runs out on only one or two significant matters, another future discussion can easily be scheduled to discuss other items.

When we make critical comments, we are tempted to get personal—to put in the sly dig or to score points rather than problem-solve. We need to be able to resist that temptation: The effective feedback-giver avoids insults and does not demean the other party when offering critical comments. The following are some specific points to keep in mind the next time you are going to give feedback to someone else:

- **Stick to the facts.** If you make it personal, you will only trigger a mud-slinging match, and that means wandering away from the facts and the chance of really solving the problem.

- **Avoid sarcasm** or irony of any kind when looking to give critical feedback. It is likely to be seen as confusing and will substantially cheapen what you are trying to do. Stick only to one level of meaning in your discussions.

- **Don’t try to build a case** by linking this particular situation to other situations. In high-intensity conflict situations, we often find that we try to build a case against the other person by linking situations that are only weakly linked. Stick to the specifics of this situation.

- **Try to be calm and balanced** by keeping your voice and tone consistent as you make your points.

- **Examine your own motives.** Are you really trying to solve a problem? Or do you just want the cheap thrill of a power trip, demonstrate how important your ideas are, or prove that they’re wrong and you are right?
4.8 Listening to the Other Person’s Response

In many feedback conversations, the conversation ends up being one-sided, with the feedback-giver doing the telling and the receiver doing all the listening (although not necessarily attentively). The key to avoiding this is to look for a more balanced discussion in which both parties are offering comments and input on a frequent basis.

Think of feedback as a way of inviting people to explore their behavior and see for themselves what needs to be done. Resist the temptation to tell them directly what they should or shouldn’t do. Outside the military, outright commands are seldom obeyed as a matter of course. The more usual response is rejection, resentment, denial, or argument. Your goal should be to encourage people to make their own decisions.

- **Avoid loaded terms** that produce emotional reactions and raise defenses. Use tentative words like “sometimes,” and “perhaps.” Avoid terms like “always” or “never.” If you say to someone “You’re always late,” they can avoid the central issue by arguing that “always” is not strictly true.

- **Don’t be apologetic or too soft.** Try to respect the other person’s intelligence. Don’t convey the message “I’m not sure you can handle this.”

- **Don’t pack in too much.** Stick to a single clear issue. Too much feedback at once can be very disheartening.

- **Focus on the most concrete and recent example** of the behavior you want to point out. It’s difficult to go back over old ground.

- **Don’t lecture.** Encourage the other person to respond in a conversational way.

- **Keep your own emotions in check.** Your goal is to have the other person respond to the information in the feedback, not to your emotional state. **Good feedback is neutral; all you’re doing is holding up a mirror so other people can see themselves more clearly.**

If you encounter rising defenses during feedback, try to deal with this on the spot. Piling on more evidence to strengthen your “case” will only make the situation worse.

When you talk to someone about a difficult subject, you will feel much more comfortable if you talk openly about your fears and your concerns about their reaction.
INSTANT-FEEDBACK: A FORMULA

Here’s a handy five-step formula for expressing feedback in everyday situations.

- **When . . . happens**
  Describe the behavior.

- **I feel . . .**
  Describe your reaction.

- **Because . . .**
  Explain why you feel this way.

- **What I imagine is . . .**
  If possible, show you understand what’s behind their behavior.

- **What I’d prefer is . . .**
  Suggest a different way of behaving.

We tend to criticize people in huge detail, but rarely praise or encourage them with more than a few casual words. So when you tell someone how well they’ve been doing, take the time to describe their behavior and its positive effects in concrete terms. Consider which of these comments has the most power to motivate:

- “Thanks for doing the report on time.”
- “Your report came in ahead of schedule and was really well prepared. I’ve shown it to the head of finance, who was particularly impressed by the detail you’ve put in.”

In essence, a “balanced” feedback discussion will occur if both parties recognize that the ultimate aim is to reach agreement on a course of action that is acceptable to both parties, or there is ownership on both sides.

Good feedback-givers keep the other person involved by asking questions and giving them the time and space to answer. Not everyone can respond instantly, and the supervisor/manager has already had time to think about the feedback. It might be new information to the feedback recipient, so give them time to think through their response.

Some of us need time to go inside our heads and think for a while before answering. Learn to be comfortable with silence while the other person is thinking. Don’t fall into the common trap of rushing in to fill gaps in the conversation. If you do, pretty soon you will find yourself doing all the work and just talking “at” the other person.

Asking questions is also not as easy as it sounds. Plan it carefully so you get the most useful information for a positive and open conversation. The more carefully you plan the key questions that you need to ask, the better and more appropriate the overall response and resulting action.
A key element in feedback-giving that is often forgotten is creating the right atmosphere. Work out what you want to say and make sure that you say it in the right way. Make sure the other person gets to tell you what they’re thinking and feeling. All of these are fundamentally important things, but if we’re not in an environment that feels comfortable, our attempt at an effective conversation can be badly damaged. Creating the right atmosphere can involve a lot of preparation, or it might be as simple as taking a quick look up and down the hallway to make sure that your quick “corridor conversation” is not going to be overheard by someone else. First make sure that you are in the right frame of mind for the conversation you wish to have. Perhaps even more importantly, try hard not to interrupt the feedback-receiver when they are talking, and make sure that you listen as attentively as possible.

It’s so easy to get distracted when someone else is talking. We all suffer from information overload, and it is not always easy to give our full attention to someone, despite our best intentions. Our mind tends to wander. Nevertheless, we do need to focus our attention on others when they are speaking, and that’s not easy. Here are a few ideas on how to make this process a bit easier:

- **Stop what you are doing**, and put it to one side.
- **Try and free your mind** from what you are currently doing, and turn your attention to the needs and concerns of the other person.
- **Try and put preoccupations out of your mind** so that you can focus all of your attention on what is being said. If necessary, jot down your thoughts at this stage of your thinking. Ask the person to wait while you briefly note those thoughts.
- **Rethink the situation**. Is there anything you might be missing?
- **Observe closely and attentively**. Non-verbal clues can be very significant.
“READING” THE RECEIVER
In addition to these preparation steps, the feedback-giver also needs to be able to “read” the other person and his or her reactions to what is being said. The following questions help in this process:

- What are the signs that the other person is prepared and able to take part in an open feedback discussion?
- Do they seem to be focused on something else?
- Are they in the right mood?
- Do you have enough time for the conversation, without having to rush to fit everything in?
- Is there too much noise and other distractions?
- Do they appear to be relatively calm and relaxed in demeanor?
- Is their body language open and welcoming?
- Are other communications likely to interfere or take precedence over yours?

Remember: We listen with our eyes as well as our ears. It’s not just the tone we use when we communicate that is important; we also need to make sure that the body language we’re using matches as well, or we will be less believable.

Most of us are nervous when we have to counsel someone about his or her lack of performance. In contexting these sorts of conversations, it is important to think about the signals we might be sending out. We wouldn’t necessarily say: “I’m very nervous,” but we could say: “I’d rather that we didn’t have to have this conversation, but it’s important that we do so that we can move forward.” That sort of approach at least allows the other person to connect what your tone of voice and body language are saying to the importance you place on the conversation. You don’t want them thinking, “There’s something not quite right here” and going into the fight-or-flight response.

Often the other person is very nervous and just wants to be somewhere else. Perhaps the person being counseled might be very agreeable to everything that is being said or suggested. Their agreement might not be coming from genuine understanding and acceptance. It’s more likely that people under these circumstances are agreeing just to get the ordeal “over and done with.” It’s easy to make mistakes if we just act on the surface data: Always test the assumptions you are making about how you think a conversation is going. Ask yourself: What’s really happening? What does my sixth sense tell me? What can I read between the lines?

After you draw some conclusions by testing what appears obvious, you can then check them by asking the other person. For example: “Are you really in agreement? I know you’ve said yes, but you didn’t ask any questions. Tell me what you are agreeing to.” In this way, you can validate the non-verbal clues that you might have picked up.

Other things that fall into the area of non-verbal communication are things like touching, how close we stand to each other, whether we are both sitting or both standing, etc. If we understand how some things get in the way of effective communication, we can minimize their impact.
A pat on the back can be interpreted as a sign of encouragement or it can lead to a different conclusion. How close we stand to someone can have a similar effect: It can make them relaxed and welcome, or edgy because their space has been invaded. Our height can affect a conversation because it can create a power imbalance. If you’re tall or short compared to the other person, you can “equalize” the situation by suggesting that you both sit down. Think about how you behave and your potential impact on another’s behavior instead of just acting on “automatic pilot.” That always helps to communicate more effectively.

One of the best ways of testing to see whether you have fully understood the speaker is to paraphrase what has been said. This helps you understand, but it can also help the speaker to appreciate whether they have properly conveyed the meaning that they intended.

Consider the following to improve your general effectiveness in the future:

- Begin a paraphrase with statements like:
  - “Now let me see if I’ve got this. Your main worry at the moment is . . .”
  - “Can I just check with you to see if I’ve got the gist of this? The major factor . . .”
  - “Before you go on to that aspect—and I realize that it’s vital—can we just pause while I see if I’ve got all of this correct? I think that you’re saying . . .”

- If it’s difficult to stop the other person, try non-verbal approaches to get their attention, such as:
  - holding up an open palm
  - gesturing into the middle of the space between you with one or two hands
  - breaking eye contact momentarily
  - hand them a drink

- Try to edit what you have been told. Summarize, generalize, try to link related concepts together. The other person will often quickly tell you if you’ve got it wrong.

- Pay particular attention to facts and figures, dates, and the pronunciation of people’s names. In fact, check to see whether you have these things right when you paraphrase what you have understood.

- Don’t wait until the speaker doesn’t want to speak any more: that could be five minutes down the track, or five hours. Gently and tactfully interrupt the flow of their narrative every now and then (for example, every 1–3 minutes) and give a paraphrase of the particular “block” of talk that has just taken place.

The most satisfying conversations take place when the other person demonstrates beyond any doubt that they are understanding you. When two people know each other really well or are covering familiar ground, it might not take much to make this clear. But in nearly every other case, it takes far more.

Even if you’re close to the other person, most of your conversations will still be exploring new territory. And the other person might not even be clear about their own thoughts and feelings in virtually every situation. In fact, it’s extremely helpful to deliberately demonstrate your understanding as the conversation continues.

The best way to show that you understand is by feeding your summaries or conversation “highlights” back into the conversation, the way you might pour oil into a machine to lubricate its parts. When you do this, both the feedback-giver and receiver feel encouraged to carry on. We all like to be understood. It’s one of the best feelings we can have. It boosts our confidence and confirms that the other person is still with us.
Conversation summaries or highlights are particularly valuable to give because they can help the receiver add to his or her own self-knowledge. When you feed back a highlight, you might be putting your finger on something the other person wasn’t previously clear about.

And of course, feeding back highlights also helps you to check your own understanding. If what you understood is really off-target, the other person will correct you.

A guide to providing good highlights:

- Concentrate on the most significant thing you’ve just heard, and keep to the point. Be concrete and specific.
- If you include “thoughts and feelings” in your highlight, try to connect them to the event or experience that caused them.
- If somebody is experiencing strong emotions, it’s often a good idea to recognize this right away in your response. This can be particularly important with younger people, whose feelings are seldom far from the surface. Recognizing and naming an individual’s feelings at the start of a conversation can make all the difference between the conversation going places or becoming a confrontation.
- Use your own words. Nobody wants to listen to a tape recorder.
- If you’re uncertain, say so. Don’t pretend to understand. Don’t be afraid to ask for a repeat.
- Don’t run ahead. Base your highlights on what you’ve learned so far, not on what you think is coming.
- Remember: Highlights are active summaries to show you understand.

The answers to these questions will put all the right elements into your effective feedback conversation plan:

- What do I want to achieve?
- Is it possible to achieve it in this conversation, or will we need another?
- How long do we need in order to cover what needs to be covered?
- How will I know that they are understanding?
- Are there any cultural issues I need to be aware of or watch for?
- Is there any “baggage” from the past? How might I deal with it?
- What will I do if I suspect something is going wrong?
- What do I need to do to get them talking?
- What needs to be agreed on?
- How will I finish the conversation?
4.9 Collaboratively Discussing Solutions

By giving the feedback-receiving individual the responsibility of finding solutions before you jump in with your own ideas, you communicate that you respect their ability to solve problems and generate ideas. You are also telling them that you expect them to figure out concrete ways to work better. Often, the best ideas are generated by those closer to the work than you are.

In addition, you avoid being put in the position of imposing your own perspective on the individual all the time. Doing so can result in the appraisee resisting your suggestions, or not offering their own solutions because you have already offered specifics.

The individual’s ideas and suggestions are valuable, whether they are on target or not. They deserve an honest reaction from you. As a feedback-giver, use your communication skills to teach, train, guide, encourage, and refocus. It’s always important to encourage and reinforce these things as much as you can.

These opportunities to talk about future solutions to current problems crop up formally and informally on a regular basis in the course of work. In every case, the questions below will help you to structure these opportunities. Use them to review the important issues before conducting a feedback discussion (or any coaching discussion, for that matter).

- What opportunities to coach do you have with this individual?
- How can you use these opportunities to develop the individual’s potential?
- What specifically have you observed that has contributed to the situation?
- How can you tie your feedback to the individual’s interest and career aspirations?
- From your experience, what potential pitfalls will you need to overcome in order to achieve success in coaching for optimal performance?
- How can you make sure that the conversation is solution-oriented?

Giving feedback is a relatively easy task when performance shortfalls are minor or the feedback is designed to improve on an already relatively strong base or platform. In these situations, feedback suggestions might be, “Try this and you are likely to get an even better result” or “Eliminate that small error and you’ll exceed the target easily.”

However, at the other end of the scale, providing feedback is an extremely difficult task when the performance shortfalls are major and any feedback is likely to cause the individual some feelings of disappointment or even distress. You might be sorely tempted to “water down” the feedback comments or be less than honest with the feedback recipient.
Unfortunately, performance that is well short of a basic threshold needs more direct and candid feedback than good performance; the high-performing individual is relatively confident about what they are doing and will be hungry for suggestions on how to get better. Conversely, the low performer lacks ideas about what to do and needs fast and direct feedback on what should be addressed first. In fact, it is always helpful to be candid and ask for the change that you want, or at least to suggest the alteration that you think would benefit the individual. This can be done in the following ways:

- Establish a clear “contract” with the person whom you are coaching in which you agree to offer direct and targeted feedback on performance shortfalls as a basis for making constructive improvements.
- Establish a clear time frame for regular coaching and feedback conversations—daily, weekly, end of shift, etc.
- Keep a notebook to record your thoughts and reflections about people’s actions or behaviors so you can provide direct and factual feedback as soon as the opportunity arises. Encourage the feedback recipient to identify reasons why they failed to meet performance objectives.
- Make your coaching interventions as frequent as necessary—offer feedback on small issues or points (this will help you avoid giving a lot of negative feedback all at once because you saved it up).
- Resist the temptation to hold back, but be sensitive with your comments. In other words, always try to be constructive, not destructive.
- An effective giver of constructive and helpful feedback can accelerate individual learning. This simply means imparting skills and knowledge to others in a manner that is supportive, non-authoritarian, structured, and problem-solving, rather than punitive. In other words, the more the feedback-giver can help people to focus and build upon their successes, the better.

These steps all involve offering people advice, but you also need to give them the room to take the necessary action.
In simple terms, the feedback-giver should do three things:

1. **Give clear and effective feedback to individuals**, with specific examples and instances of successful behavior. Some guidelines for giving effective feedback include:
   - **Accentuate the positive.** If the individual has done three things wrong and one thing right, start by concentrating on the one right thing. It creates a more positive atmosphere, and helps dissolve the anxiety the person is probably feeling. It helps reinforce the individual’s own sense of competence, which will help to soften the blow when you eventually move on to looking at what didn’t go so right.
   - **Choose the time and place carefully.** If you do need to give negative feedback (when things don’t go right), try and do it in private, rather than in public. Giving negative feedback to an individual when others are present might be an embarrassing and humiliating experience for the person, and such feelings will tend to impair the individual’s ability to concentrate on solutions. Don’t blame—solve. Don’t try and give feedback to the individual when he/she is obviously involved in a work process and needs to concentrate on that. Learn to wait.
   - **Use repetition.** This simply means that you might need to say a thing and then say it again in a different way, perhaps from a different perspective.

2. **Find teachable moments, and praise.** Accentuating the positive in feedback is a good start, but not a finish. Sometimes you shouldn’t wait for the individual to bring results to you—you need to be with them, on the lookout for teachable moments. Teachable moments are simply opportunities that arise (and depart) on the spur of the moment; the circumstances are good or ideal for getting a coaching point across. Teachable moments are often the same as problems or crises: look at them not as annoyances and distractions from giving guidance and coaching, but rather as opportunities and resources for giving guidance and coaching.

3. **Jointly problem-solve.** Giving guidance and feedback is not simply a one-way process. Sometimes you will learn as much, if not more, from the entire process than the individual. As the individual improves in competence and maturity, he/she will have a lot more to offer in terms of solutions and insights. In this way, the coach-appraisee relationship can move from a dependency status to a partnership status. This role shift is natural and to be welcomed.
4.10 Focusing on the Content
To get the maximum in quantity and quality when interacting with another person (and particularly one who is trying to offer constructive feedback), there needs to be a high level of mutual respect between both people.

We show the opposite of respect to people when we trivialize their ideas or views. Be vigilant so that this doesn’t happen. This means that we must always assume that the feedback-giver is not motivated by maliciousness or ill will. They have invested enough time in thinking about useful feedback; the least that the individual can do is to listen without being critical or attacking the feedback-giver.

Here are a few ways in which you can do this more successfully:

- **Give others the benefit of the doubt** as to the seriousness of what they are saying, and the manner in which they are saying it. Suspend judgment on whether their concerns are warranted and substantial, or baseless and trivial. Wait until they have finished speaking, and try and put what they have said into the context that your experience and perceptions can give you.

- **Be careful about appearing patronizing.** It’s so difficult to know just how we come across to others, but it pays to be vigilant in monitoring our own words and body language. If you want to make sure that you never get an honest response from another person again about your style, aggressively challenge any observations they make. You need to know in particular if you have the habit of talking down to people. It’s very easy to do, and very damaging.

- **Humor is a great way of building bridges** between people, but it can also build walls. This can happen when the humor you use is heavy-handed and a put-down. Be careful when responding to others; do not joke about things that are deadly serious or important to them.

- Communication will be so much better when we listen to someone talk and then attempt to **summarize what the feedback-giver has just said.** This is a way of confirming that the loop has been closed and both sides are of “like” minds. Always try to do this, but be careful that the summary you present is fair and not distorted. Don’t oversimplify what you have just heard merely for the sake of trying to speed up the communication process.
Words can sometimes be like icebergs: most of the meaning is beneath the surface. It’s a good idea to make sure that your conversations are mighty but not titanic, or understanding will sink without a trace! We need to be on the alert at all times for what lies beneath the surface in any communication. Look for the real meaning by adopting the following specific approaches:

- **Watch the body language of the person talking.** Does it reinforce the words being said, or does it perhaps contradict what is being said? If there is contradiction, then perhaps there is internal conflict within the speaker that needs to be clarified.

- **Listen for what is not said.** Is the silence deafening on certain things? For example, if a person is talking about something or someone you are well acquainted with and chooses not to mention something that you consider quite fundamental, you are entitled to ask yourself and certainly entitled to ask them why this is so.

- **To what extent has the person modified the words being uttered because you are the audience?** For example, would the speaker speak the same way, emphasizing the same things, if they had been speaking to someone else? If not, you might find it useful to speculate on why this is the case.

- **What is the context of the feedback-giver’s remarks?** If they are talking about details, what about the setting of those details? Pull back from the close-up view of those particulars, and consider the background or circumstances of the situation. Don’t be distracted into not seeing the forest for the trees.

- **Speculate on what motives might be behind the speaker’s words. What’s going on here?** How does it affect your interests? Should you be just a little bit concerned about what is being said? Are the words a preamble to praise or blame? Is the speaker just going through the motions, and not terribly interested in this at all? Is there something fundamental that you missed?

- **Evaluate what big-picture issues the feedback-giver is trying to describe.** Are they trying to help you to acquire more skills, improve overall quality, improve efficiency, or even improve cost effectiveness? Your own performance as a manager might be a key part of these goals.
4.11 Listening Calmly and Attentively, and Clarifying the Message

As we suggested earlier, you can increase your comfort level by making sure that the environment for your conversation is appropriate. It can also help to increase the level of comfort of the person you’re talking with. When you are both feeling at ease, you are less likely to be in a stress-induced flight-or-fight state, where your body and mind are prepared to take evasive action or confront a perceived danger. It’s a handy reflex if you happen to come across a dangerous situation, but it’s not conducive to a relaxed feedback conversation.

It only takes one person to be in fight-or-flight mode for a conversation to be in danger of going off the rails. If you are able to tune in to another person’s tone and body language, you can quickly pick up the stress signals and start to become stressed yourself.

In order to open up the feedback conversation, both parties need to exchange as much information as possible so that all the relevant data has been shared. If the picture is complete, the responses are likely to be more appropriate (by both a manager and the person to whom feedback is being given and received). In other words, we need to make certain that both parties have a complete picture of the performance issues, so that the conversation can focus on discovering the best solutions for the future.

In formal feedback conversations in particular, it is extremely important to listen to the message and be seen to concentrate fully (especially where the discussion is serious or about correcting performance shortfalls). If you fail to consciously tune in to the other person, at best you’re only half involved. If it is obvious that you are going through the motions but you’re not really there, this will annoy and irritate the other person.

The good feedback-receiver works hard to focus on the other person. It’s like tuning in to a radio station: the trick is to get rid of interference from all other sources.

These outside distractions include things in the outside world (other people talking, the radio, etc.) and the stray thoughts inside your head.

What you need to do is clear your own mind as much as possible to make room for the other person’s messages. Put the paper you are reading down and avoid the temptation to sneak a look at it. If you find a computer screen catching your attention, turn it off or move to where it cannot be seen. Don’t kid yourself: It’s impossible to pay full attention to two things at the same time!

It’s important that the other person sees you paying attention. This is the vital first step toward encouraging someone to express himself or herself. People can tell from your body language if you are paying attention to them.
There are some things you can do to demonstrate that you’re tuned in and interested in the other person.

Always try to:

- Face your conversational partner directly.
- Be relaxed and open, rather than stiff or hunched up.
- Maintain eye contact at a comfortable level (don’t stare).
- Use your face to show that you’re in tune with the mood of the other person. If the other person is being serious, show your understanding by looking serious yourself.
- Nod from time to time. This is perhaps the easiest way to show that your “receiver” is switched on.

If people can’t see your expressions, if they can’t clearly hear what you’re saying, or if their train of thought is being interrupted, you are not communicating effectively with them. They will start to feel uncomfortable, or have negative reactions to what you are saying.

Other things that will help keep the feedback conversation from going off track are listening with empathy and checking to see if you are understanding what they are trying to get across. When we listen with empathy, we are trying to put ourselves in the other person’s shoes.

It doesn’t mean that we have to agree with their position. It just means that we are able to show that we have heard not only the words they are saying, but also the feelings associated with them. By listening with empathy, we show that we are trying to understand as well as trying to be understood.

For effective feedback to take place, each person has to understand what the other is saying in the same way that the other person understands it. At the very simplest level, we need to be using words that have a common meaning, and we should check that meaning. We often use words such as quality, timely, quickly, and so forth, but are we always sure that what we understand them to mean is what the other person understands? Be specific and make sure that you explain what you mean:

“I’d like this done by the end of the day” or “If you finish the report by Tuesday, I will have time to read it before the presentation.”

As the feedback discussion unfolds, it is a good idea for the individual to monitor their own reactions on an ongoing basis (particularly if the feedback is critical or hard-hitting about what hasn’t been achieved, and there are heightened emotions about the issues). This is not the time to get angry, defensive, or over-emotional. Make sure that any negative feelings or reactions are rationalized quickly and prevented from escalating. You can always note what you do not feel to be fair or reasonable and then deal with it calmly when you can look at the issues in a clear and logical way.

As you try to build your understanding of the other person, there will be times when you realize that you need more information to fill in the picture. The first step is to work out what it is you want to know. Go for the most important missing pieces, rather than the details.
Module Four: Giving and Receiving Performance Feedback

Ask yourself:

- Do I understand the background well enough?
- Am I clear about the feedback-giver or the receiver’s role?
- Do I know enough about the part played by other people?
- Do I understand how the parts of the story are connected together?

The second step is to gather the missing facts. One way of doing this is to request the information directly.

Here are some ways you can ask for information without turning it into a question. (The problem with asking questions is that this tends to narrow conversations rather than open them up, and too many questions in a row can feel like an attack).

- Explain what it is you want to know and why you want to know it.
  
  “I’d like you to explain how the argument started, because I still don’t understand why the two of you couldn’t agree.” “I can see why Sally was angry, but I’d like to know how David felt about it.”

- Ask the person to elaborate on what they’ve already said. You can put yourself in the request to show that you are interested and involved.
  
  “So tell me more about your meeting with Mary and Bill and what happened with Bill.”
  
  “I can see why you feel she’s let you down. I’d like to know if this has happened before.”

- When you hear somebody half-saying something, prompt them to say it in full.
  
  “You said John sometimes behaves in an irresponsible way . . .”

- If someone’s story is vague or murky, work hard for clarity. Encourage people to be precise and concrete. Encourage them to be real, and to personalize their stories. If the story is feeling fuzzy, ask them to put it into focus for you. If you are puzzled, say so and ask for clarification. All this takes effort on your part, but it’s well worth it.

- When asking a question, try to use open questions—those that can’t be answered by a simple “yes” or “no.” You want a full reply.

Here’s an example of the difference:

Closed question: “Was the test okay?”

Open question: “How are you feeling, now that the test is over?”

- Conversations can get complicated, so from time to time, take a break and check back with the feedback-giver. Pull the threads of the story together and replay it as a summary to confirm that both of you are in agreement on what’s been communicated.

An example:

“Let’s see if I’ve got this right. You want to switch departments, but you’re worried about how I’d feel about it. Is that right?”
Summaries are a useful way of moving a conversation along. If you find the other person is giving too much detail, combine a summary with a request for more information. This is a way of saying: “I’ve got it—let’s move on.”

An example:

“I understand that your boss agreed to look at your proposal. Can you tell me what happened next?”

You can also ask the other person to give you a summary, as long as you’ve been paying attention. Asking for a short replay is likely to be interpreted as a sign of respect.

An example:

“Could you run over the main points again? I want to get them totally clear in my mind.”

The more complete and accurate your understanding, the more you will get out of a conversation. If you keep an open mind, every feedback conversation will be an opportunity to learn from the other person’s experiences. Be sure that the conversation remains calm and reasonable for both parties, and that emotions don’t get out of control.
4.12 Acknowledging the Concerns
A common response when someone is giving us feedback is to deny that there is anything wrong, or to suggest that there is no need for the conversation to occur at all. The person acts surprised, offended, incredulous, argumentative, or even defensive. This approach only makes life difficult for the feedback-giver, and suggests that the receiver is not going to benefit from the guidance that is being offered as long as they have this attitude.

A much more helpful and beneficial approach is to show the feedback-giver that you understand what they are saying and that you are willing to talk about it in an open and flexible way. The feedback-giver needs to be sensitive to the receiver’s needs, and make sure they consider any different views or perspectives that are shared.

We don’t always understand everything we hear; if we don’t clarify the areas that we don’t understand, no one is going to do it for us. Learn how to carefully probe points that you do not fully understand.

Other suggestions to become better at listening: Do not be intimidated by buzzwords, acronyms, and jargon; subtly but resolutely ask for explanations. When we speak, we often edit as we go, leaving out factors that we presume everyone will know. We all have blind spots in our vision of the world, so be sure to get any information gaps filled in. Tactfully challenge the speaker to provide details to help us see the world through their eyes.

Listening is not passive—it is active: You need to combine, synthesize, and transform what you have heard into something meaningful. A detective who hears conflicting testimonies from eyewitneseses and someone assembling a puzzle each have to work at it and try to detect patterns and wholes greater than the sum of the obvious parts. You will not understand others if you remain silent about things that are unclear to you.

Try not to come across as shy or unassertive in checking and probing. You have a right to understand, and a right not to be patronized, confused, and power-tripped by others. What you don’t know can harm you, particularly if you have been pretending that you have understood, and are then put to the test about that presumed knowledge.

In order to keep the feedback conversation fully on track, it is important to make sure that both the feedback-giver and the receiver remain focused on the specific points to which the discussion relates. In addition, there might be a number of wider or bigger issues that can act as useful frameworks, as they often give a context to the discussion and ensure that the points remain on target and are relevant to the issues of concern. You don’t want the conversation to deviate or deteriorate into unrelated or personal issues.

The key to responding in a positive, open way to feedback is to recognize that you can learn from the experience. Feedback is vital to all forms of learning, whether in the classroom or in everyday life. How else can we find out if what we’ve done is “right” or appropriate?
The three basic steps for receiving feedback effectively are:

- **Check your understanding.** Summarize it back to the other person. Emotions distort and make it easy to misunderstand feedback. If you are confused, ask for clarification. To make things clear, see if there are other examples to learn from. Also, spend a few moments checking your understanding; it will allow time for your initial feelings to settle. It’s the equivalent of counting to 10.

- **Deal with your feelings.** Even well-meaning feedback can feel like an attack. If the feedback upsets you, recognize the feeling and deal with it, either in your own mind or openly with the other person. Be prepared to accept some pain, however, in order to gain an insight into your behavior and the consequences.

- **Look for the lesson.** When you think you have the message of the feedback clear in your mind, ask yourself: “Is there something here worth accepting?” Feedback isn’t always valuable: The other person might be motivated by their own interests, not yours, and there might not be much truth in what they say. But check it out.

Explore the feedback as honestly and non-defensively as you can. With the help of the other person, examine the options for change. Ask yourself: “What can I do differently next time?”

Here are four things we often do to avoid dealing with feedback that is painful:

- **We deny it, even though we know it contains more than a grain of truth.**
- **We hear only the parts we want to hear—the ones that aren’t so challenging.**
- **We shoot the messenger by attacking the other person’s behavior in some way.**
- **We agree with the feedback but inside decide to do nothing about it. This makes us appear to be open to change, but without committing us to any real effort.**

In the final analysis, if the feedback we receive is ultimately about achieving a better outcome, an improvement objective, or a team target, or even to make all of our work lives a little easier, none of these reasons should be seen as legitimate.

If the problems are so large that you don’t know quite where to start, simply think about how you can “slice” or break them into “chunks.” Each component will quickly become manageable and readily tackled with existing resources or capacity.
The following specific steps can help you help others analyze and manage feedback problems more efficiently:

- Look at the overall change that has to be achieved by the individual to whom you are giving feedback, and identify any discrete activities or tasks that can be handled separately from mainstream tasks.

- Assess whether parts of the problem can be given to other people to solve, or subcontracted or even given to external groups to handle more efficiently or more quickly.

- Try to balance resources so that complex and difficult aspects of a performance problem are given the most focus, and less important or simpler aspects are deferred or handled as a lower priority.

- Encourage people to first work on the simpler things that they need to do in order to improve. The success experienced here will motivate them to tackle harder parts of the problem later.
4.13 Avoiding Defensiveness or Over-Explaining

People often get defensive during a feedback discussion. This feeling might be legitimate if the receiver feels that the feedback is biased or prejudiced in some way, or not quite fair or balanced. They might also need to add more information. If the individual is performing below expectations, there is not likely to be a legitimate reason for defensiveness.

Tell yourself this whenever a person gives you an unacceptable excuse. Eventually, the individual will run out of excuses and will have to refocus their attention on solving the problem.

It is important to reinforce the importance of closing any performance gap: highlight the difference between what the individual is presently doing and what they are supposed to be doing, and explain why you see the performance gap as a problem. The discussion will be easier for both of you if you approach it from a problem-solving viewpoint.

Unless the feedback is completely inaccurate (in which case the feedback-giver has probably not done their homework well) the receiver’s role is not to be over-contradictory. This does not mean allowing almost anything or everything to be said without comment. Inaccuracies should be dealt with firmly and in no uncertain terms. However, these should be addressed with a few well-chosen words and as unemotionally as possible. This allows the feedback-giver to adjust their feedback as much as necessary, but not lose the thread of their overall message. This is important because the feedback should be heard by the receiver in its entirety and not derailed because a few details need to be adjusted or put into context.

Once the feedback message is complete, any major disagreements can be raised and dealt with appropriately with the knowledge that both parties have painted a full picture before they dispute the facts.

Now that we have discussed a two-way approach to handling feedback, remember that the feedback-giver must make sure that he or she has prepared well, got the story right, and can keep the receiver motivated and focused. The culture of many organizations is often more concerned with catching employees doing something wrong. They expect people to learn only from failure. Although some might argue that this is a necessary condition in an increasingly competitive world, other people believe that the behavior of a small minority has created a “policing” mentality under which the vast majority must also suffer. By focusing on the positives in one feedback conversation, we send a positive signal to all employees.

To give really good positive feedback, you should therefore:

- **Give feedback instantly.** Give it as close to the actual event as possible.
- **Be honest.** If someone has done a good job, then let them know how you feel about it. “Thank you” goes a long way!
- **Be specific.** Explain specifically what the individual did that you feel deserves your praise.
- **Focus on behavior.** Comment on what they actually did, and how it made you feel.
Many feedback conversations take place quickly, often even on the spur of the moment. But you still have to plan for them! The best and most mutually satisfying conversations are those where both parties have taken time to prepare and take things slowly as they talk, (point by point). They must not allow themselves to rush through the process unnecessarily.

This last point of taking time during the conversation is extremely important. There will be times when it is critical that you collect your thoughts or reflect a little more deeply on a subject (rather than respond to everything that is said immediately). This will usually lead to a higher quality response and a subsequent action plan. The feedback-giver and the receiver should not be afraid to ask for time to think or reflect. This might mean taking a break or arranging another meeting in a few days’ time when the issue can be discussed again after you have had time to do some checking. Develop some options, or just put things into a broader context.

The following suggestions should help you have more effective feedback discussions:

- When you identify or listen to a potential solution, quickly list all of the reasons why it seems reasonable or logical.
- “Cluster” or “chunk” all of your reasons into a few major categories that can be presented as your frame of reference or context for judging the decision or solution.
- Write your solution or decision in the center of a single piece of paper, and put at least three or four contextual points around the edge to help support it (e.g., make a note of why the decision is a good one in response to the statement “This solution arises from the following foundational premise . . .”).
- When listening to any conclusions or possible strategies to solve a problem, refer to your own written frame of reference to make sure that it relates to your contextual criteria for judgment.
4.14 Welcoming Suggestions about the Future

A good feedback-receiver is probably a good life-long learner who uses all feedback comments, good and bad, to help them reflect on their actions, learn the lesson, and then focus on how things might be different in the future.

Continuous reflection and learning helps us to plan our own best actions, and also manage a whole range of situations in the future for which we carefully apply the lessons of the past. The following is a list of general feedback suggestions you can give to others to help them better receive feedback:

- Reflect on your life experiences, and analyze your personal learning from events. Ask whether your learning is typically formal or informal, and systematically collected or not (and what this means for the future).

- Discover your own personal learning style (or your preferences in terms of how you best like to experience new information around you).

- Keep a journal, and focus on several areas in order to know yourself more deeply. Note even idle thoughts and reflections.

- Read books or articles that deal with learning concepts. Learn what motivates you and others, and think about how you learn at a theoretical and practical level. Seek to apply this knowledge in your work.

- Talk with others and get their picture of you and the way you operate; remain the main judge of yourself, simply accepting the feedback given. Later, compare it with other data you have gathered and assess what you have learned about yourself.

- Initiate conversations with others, explaining your need to understand them better. Share experiences about how you think that people “tick.”

Earlier in this module, we suggested that a good feedback conversation should focus on one major observation at a time. We further suggested that this allows the person to address the one issue and not become too confused.

A better approach is to commit to one thing that you can do differently or better in the future. This does not need to be a big thing or something that takes a long time to achieve. However, it should be something that can be readily achieved as a change for the better, and serve as a platform for future improvements.

Remember this: If you hold regular and frequent feedback discussions and progress updates, you will establish two-way trust. This will deepen your relationships; feedback can then become richer and even more helpful.
4.15 360-Degree Feedback

Multi-rater or 360-degree feedback is a unique way of receiving feedback on an individual in a very structured way, usually through the vehicle of a questionnaire. 360-degree feedback is a very different kind of feedback process, and it is worth spending a little time in the remaining pages of this module to explore what it involves.

Today, more organizations are implementing multi-rater or 360-degree assessment or feedback because it is collected “all around” an employee: from their supervisors, subordinates, peers, and often suppliers and customers. If the feedback involves the individual feedback-receiver and their boss, this is usually called “180-degree feedback.” If it involves peers, subordinates, and the boss, it is called “360-degree feedback.” On some rare occasions, it can also involve external mentors, customers, or even supplier organizations. In these cases, it is typically called “720-degree feedback” because the all-around feedback is collected twice; the results are aggregated to give a rich stream of feedback data.

A 360-degree assessment usually provides a comprehensive summary of an individual’s skills, abilities, styles, and job-related competencies.

The use of 360-degree feedback is increasing for the following reasons:

- It provides a structured and often confidential process for collecting feedback.
- It typically provides very accurate feedback.
- The role of manager/leader is changing rapidly.
- It allows communication of the critical behaviors for success.
- It provides direction for individualized development planning.
- It provides for a positive culture change.
- It helps employee morale and retention (if it is well-implemented).

Various 360-degree feedback “inventories” can be used in a wide range of human resource development situations—including supervisory training, management development, assessment centers, succession planning, style and leadership awareness, career development, needs assessment, training and organization development, employee and management coaching, and recruitment and selection.

Although more organizations are adopting 360-degree feedback, it is still not in widespread use. The process has the potential to deliver many benefits, but it is only suitable and beneficial if the organization thinks carefully about its introduction and manages the process at every necessary level.
Many things must be considered before you introduce 360-degree feedback to your organization. Consider the following key issues:

- **Do you have a “command and control” culture?**
  
  *Solution*—Change the culture to a more collaborative or team-orientated one before expecting people to be open about feedback.

- **Has the organization encouraged feedback processes in the past?**
  
  *Solution*—If not, introduce and encourage effective feedback by all as part of the culture. Be clear about what you expect of every supervisor and manager in particular.

- **Is your present performance-appraisal system effective?**
  
  *Solution*—Review and improve the present performance-appraisal system by adopting the collaborative, open, and flexible approaches suggested by the Janus System.

- **Do you have appropriate support systems in place?**
  
  *Solution*—Develop appropriate support systems prior to 360-degree implementation; include coaches and mentors, and develop effective and open two-way communication channels.

- **Do you have the support of the CEO and senior executives to implement this system?**
  
  *Solution*—Educate and influence the CEO and senior executives to recognize that their active support is a critical foundation for acceptance and positive regard by all concerned.
Here are a few other suggestions for successful implementation:

- Identify and provide a clear purpose for a 360-degree feedback process.
- Link the process to individual development and growth, rather than to rewards.
- Encourage voluntary participation (without sanctions).
- Ensure confidentiality and anonymity as much as possible, to encourage complete honesty and straight talk.
- Encourage the individual’s “ownership” of the raters that are being selected.
- Make sure that the data collected on performance and behavior is relevant to the organization’s values and/or core competencies.
- Create a simple data-collection process. (The Janus System includes one.)
- Make sure that people are trained to give and receive feedback.
- Encourage all people to integrate agreed-on behavioral changes into personal development plans, and to consider all feedback an important part of their development.
- Involve and develop ownership of those in line management and other supervisors and managers throughout the process. Make sure that managers understand how to coach and support their employees.
- Provide extensive communication and training on how the system works.
- Pilot and test the 360-degree feedback process in order to work out mistakes.
- Make sure that review processes support the implementation efforts.

As we have suggested, each individual organization will need to add their own items to the above list and make sure that it is ready for a process that is likely to have a major impact when it is introduced. The payoffs or benefits are high, but there are going to be risks that need to be managed.
THE JANUS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The on-line Janus Performance Management System goes further than a full 360-degree feedback process. Instead of offering this as a fixed or rigid process, it allows individuals to influence how it is assembled and deployed. This flexibility is possible because the assessment process itself is developed on a broad and well-researched extended competency base, which allows individuals and/or their managers to select the most relevant competencies for the questionnaire to be designed.

The Janus Performance Management System allows the individual and/or the manager to develop an entirely customized assessment profile by selecting as few as three and as many as ten competency categories from a total list of 36. The resultant assessment can then be applied to a single person’s job or to a job that is done by several people.

Janus allows you to create an assessment for the individual or for a direct report or a member of a project team who acts as a rater of the individual.

Once you have logged into Janus via the hrdpess.profiles-r-us.com web site and you have selected who the assessment is for, the system offers a number of assessment options:

1. You can choose to create a new assessment.
2. You can edit one of the generic assessment profiles.
3. You can edit one of your existing custom profiles.

The Janus System already has a library of generic assessments for you to edit, or you can re-use assessments that have been created before for other individuals.

The example shown on the next few pages will show you how to create a custom profile. We will simply follow the six-step prompts in order to create a custom 180- or 360-degree profile. The six steps from the Janus Performance Management System are outlined on the following pages.

Please note: These descriptive pages are no substitute for visiting the site on a “live” basis and becoming familiar with the on-screen options for yourself.
THE JANUS SYSTEM FOR CREATING CUSTOMIZED ASSESSMENTS

Step 1: Select your competencies.

Select between three and ten competencies you would like to include in your new customized assessment. To select a competency category, click on the checkbox at the left of the category name. To find out more about a competency, click on the competency name and a pop-up window will provide a detailed explanation before you make your choice.

Don’t forget: Every one of these 36 competencies can be found in Volume III of this documentation set, along with detailed information about what the competency covers.

Once you have selected at least three categories, click the Continue button at the bottom of the page. On average, 6–8 competencies are considered most applicable to the job role in question and the particular tasks ahead.
Step 2: Rank your categories.

The numbers on the left-hand side of the competency categories can be altered to reflect how important these competencies are if you put them in priority order. The system will allow you to put your highest-priority competency selection first. When it comes to printing output reports, your final selected order will be followed exactly.

Once you are happy with the ranking, click the Continue button. To add or delete a competency, press the Back button.
Step 3: Confirm your categories.

At this stage, the system simply asks you to verify that you would like to create a customized assessment using the selected competencies in this rank order.

If this is OK, click the Continue button. To make changes, click the Back button.
Step 4: Rank your questions.

The system now prompts you to rank the questions that are automatically generated or drawn from the competencies you have selected, from the most important to the least important. You can choose to rank as few or as many as you wish. Once again, the system allows individuals to prioritize their selections; in this case, you will be prioritizing the individual questions that the system automatically includes to help people to discover their expertise in the competency area.

If this is OK, click the Continue button. To make further changes, click the Back button.
Step 5: Confirm the order of your questions.

The system now simply asks you to confirm the order of the questions you have selected. If you are satisfied, click the Continue button. To make changes, click the Back button.
Step 6: **Name your customized assessment.**

Finally, give your customized assessment a name. The name should relate to the area that you plan to assess (from your category selections). You can use a person’s name (“Mary’s assessment”) or a more general name, such as “sales effectiveness profile.”

This naming convention is important—especially for managers. They should pick a title that they can easily remember, or one that will readily apply to a group of individuals when they go to access the assessment from the main menu.

Once again, if the name is OK, click the Continue button. To make changes, click the Back button.
The “Complete” Stage

Once you have completed all the preceding steps, the Janus System will automatically generate your customized assessment or questionnaire, and immediately offer you the opportunity to take a self-assessment or a 180-degree or 360-degree assessment (or you can elect to take it later by clicking on the main menu title at the Janus home page). Study the example shown below for a “customer relations supervisor assessment.”

Once the customized assessment has been created, individuals can use the on-screen instructions to generate a self report (with no other raters), let their supervisor contribute (by selecting the 180-degree assessment), or invite up to ten people to rate them on the selected competencies via a full 360-degree assessment. The system will even allow individuals to automatically e-mail their selected raters and invite them to come to the site confidentially and participate.
In addition to designing a custom questionnaire that will provide statistical feedback in the form of bar charts in the selected competency areas, individuals are also given the opportunity to invite raters to provide anecdotal comments. This feature asks raters to provide confidential comments in “keep,” “stop,” “start” format in relation to the selected competencies.

The resulting output report from any customized assessment usually runs at least thirty pages, providing considerable material for interpretation and development. Detailed coaching tips relevant to the questionnaire results are also provided. An example of a typical output report from the system is shown in Module 10. As both individuals and managers can see, this provides an extremely rich source of feedback and an excellent foundation for improvement.
4.16 Summary
In this module on giving and receiving performance feedback, we have suggested that giving constructive feedback involves:

- Thinking carefully about the feedback message to be given
- Maintaining an open dialogue between the feedback-giver and receiver
- Reaching an agreement on future action that is acceptable to both parties and that is focused on the facts (not on guesses, opinions, and assumptions).

Equally, we have suggested that receiving feedback effectively involves:

- Listening carefully and calmly to the feedback message
- Clarifying to make sure that there is full understanding
- Welcoming the feedback input in order to improve performance

Becoming a skilled feedback-giver or receiver means that a lot of hard work and practice will have to be put into the effort. It will also take a considerable amount of time, but doing this properly will pay off. It will help to make the whole experience something from which everyone who participates will benefit.

Remember: People will sometimes judge the effectiveness of a performance management system by the openness of the relationship between the manager/supervisor and the appraisee. If both parties can handle feedback well, it is likely that the entire process will be regarded positively.
COACHING is not a specialized activity reserved for the very few, but a basic operating strategy for anyone trying to get the best out of individual workers or teams. It is a key competency for professional development, and an important part of a formal performance management system. Coaching can also be enormously effective without a formal system.
## Module Five
Coaching for Performance Excellence

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Module Five
Coaching for Performance Excellence

5.1 Introduction
This module of the Janus Performance Management System is designed to help supervisors and managers coach employees throughout the entire appraisal cycle. Specifically, this module will help you to:

- Monitor the individual’s progress as they work to achieve their performance objectives and demonstrate selected competencies.
- Provide constructive feedback to individuals on their performance, and help them focus on how they can improve.
- Assist in the process of actively involving employees in:
  - Setting performance objectives in a collaborative way
  - Agreeing on relevant competencies, and then developing them over time
  - Conducting Periodic Progress Review discussions, using a positive coaching approach
  - Conducting Performance Summary and Development discussions, using coaching interventions

This module on effective coaching will draw on the information from feedback already provided in the previous module, along with techniques that have not yet been discussed. We will also look at how to apply some of these coaching intervention techniques or methods.
5.2 What is Coaching?

You don’t have to be an expert on coaching to coach. It is actually a basic operating strategy used by anyone who is trying to get the best out of individual workers and teams. It is a key skill that helps us to develop people in today’s organizations, and it can be done outside of a formal performance management system.

Coaching as a strategy is relatively new in organizations, but it’s been around for a long time. Public speakers, entertainers, athletes, and even politicians all have coaches to help them improve what they do and strive to be the best. Name any occupation and chances are good that there’s a coach for it.

Every coach’s key role is to help an individual improve what they are doing. They do this by giving the person they are coaching feedback about their performance. They also help them plan their development, so that they can improve their skills and stretch. You don’t have to be an expert in the field to be a good coach; you just need to want to help someone achieve. Many of the best athletic coaches were only average performers themselves; top athletes, in fact, often fail as coaches.

Coaching is fundamentally concerned with helping people learn to develop themselves. The process usually involves the individual identifying areas for improvement and then developing skills or competencies on the job, perhaps through informal or formal “training” sessions or even a college course.

Good coaching is not about doing what the coach suggests or developing other people by telling them what to do, but rather focusing individuals on their own development goals and helping them to achieve them.

Coaches need to be able to work at three levels:

- **Work closely with people** “one on one,” giving feedback, helping them set goals and tasks that will “stretch” them, and supporting them through any difficulties they may experience.

- **Set up a climate or environment** that encourages people to take risks and do things differently, and then learn from their experience. This can involve getting people to reflect on their experiences and draw lessons from them, find ways to learn from others, challenge themselves, and find opportunities to learn new things.

- **Actively set up individual learning opportunities** by giving them the chance to work with different people, linking them to others who can help in their development, providing new and challenging work experiences, and giving them access to people and situations that they would not be able to access easily on their own.

Coaching is simply concerned with providing ongoing information to individuals at all levels about their performance. In this instance, coaching therefore includes:

- Giving recognition to encourage and to reward good performance.

- Providing corrective feedback to change performance that needs to be improved.
Coaching is, obviously, one of the most important managerial skills for improving performance and motivating individuals to give their best.

Of course, it should come as no surprise that to perform effectively, employees need information on how they’re doing. They need to know what they are doing well, and what they need to do differently. Coaching helps the supervisor or manager to present feedback to employees in a way that motivates them to perform effectively.

In this sense, coaching motivates individuals to perform more effectively.

- Coaching is a way to share perceptions of how well they are performing their job responsibilities, moving toward achieving their performance objectives, and demonstrating particular competencies.
- Coaching provides a way to develop knowledge, skills, and behavior to achieve better long-term results.

When coaching skills are used effectively throughout the year, any performance problems can usually be corrected before the Annual Performance Review discussion. Even more importantly, individuals can be motivated and guided to achieve more than they would have if left purely to their own devices.
5.3 When to Coach
As we have already suggested, in order to be effective, a supervisor or manager ideally needs to provide day-to-day informal coaching throughout the year, as well as more formal coaching during the periodic Performance Update discussions and during the Annual Performance Review discussion.

Coaching can be done on an informal basis, but formal coaching should be scheduled at the periodic Performance Update discussion, and sometime between the Objective Setting discussion and the Performance Review discussion.

In addition to these more formal situations done as part of the appraisal cycle, there are a number of other situations in which coaching can be provided, such as . . .

When the employee:

- Is learning a new skill.
- Is performing a task that you think can be done more effectively if he/she uses a different method.
- Is assigned a large or very different kind of project.
- Is faced with a new career opportunity.
- Is not meeting standards.
- Has difficulty prioritizing work.
- Has just returned from a training program.

If you are coaching employees, you will need to gather information about their performance. This is typically done by regularly monitoring or reviewing their performance.

Ongoing monitoring will help you to gather the information needed to keep performance on track. Monitoring is not a passive activity or one that you can do only occasionally. It is much more effective to adopt a particular method (or several methods) to gather the data that you will need. In the context of effective coaching, remember that data-gathering is not a passive or casual activity. Give it commitment and effort. A manager will have to get close to the individual they are seeking to coach, and make careful observations about what might be worthy of further discussion and when this discussion ought to take place.
METHODS OF GATHERING INFORMATION FOR MONITORING PERFORMANCE

To gather information on performance, consider doing the following:

- Schedule regular meetings with employees to review how the work is going.
- Check work progress against pre-established accountability statements or Action Plans to see if performance is on target.
- Review reports or target checklists that have been developed at the beginning of the appraisal cycle.
- Walk around so you can observe how the work is going, and hold informal discussions.
- Get feedback (formal and informal) from other people with whom the individual works.
- Encourage an individual to engage in 180-degree or 360-degree feedback through competency-based questionnaires.
- Inspect the work output, results, or consequences to check on its quality or accuracy.
- Ask individuals to provide progress presentations or updates.
- Follow up after making a request to verify that tasks have been done or if there are problems that you can help an employee resolve.
- Evaluate how well a job responsibility or performance objective was completed by analyzing the results and discussing adjustment.
- Monitor customer complaints and satisfaction (internal or external) in order to evaluate or verify individual performance.

Other monitoring techniques can be added to this list, but our point is that any coaching intervention needs to be made on the basis of sound monitoring processes and data-gathering (not guesses, assumptions, or hearsay). In other words, effective data-gathering methods provide a strong foundation upon which helpful coaching can subsequently take place. Now let’s look at how this coaching can be carried out.
5.4 Understanding Your Coaching Style

Before you can be really effective as a coach, you need to understand your own style and how it can help or hinder the coaching process.

As long as the coaching style you are adopting suits the situation (the person and the task), learning will be maximized. Problems arise, though, if the style you are using to coach someone does not match what the situation demands.

All of us have a natural or preferred coaching style. We need to understand what it is and when it’s appropriate to use so that as coaches we can learn to adapt or “flex” our style to the needs of the situation and the person we are trying to coach. To develop a good understanding of our style, let’s first consider the extremes.

As the simple diagram above indicates, at one end of the coaching continuum we find the “teaching” coach. This type of coach does a lot of “telling.” They have the expertise and they are trying to pass it on to help the other person achieve something concrete. They are drawing on their experience to pass along the skills and knowledge the other person needs in order to do their job. This sort of coaching is appropriate when tasks are to be performed in the “right” way over and over. It’s often (but not always) particularly helpful to people who are in front-line jobs where they have to achieve a consistent and predictable outcome in providing a product or a service.
At the other end of the scale is the “learning to learn” coach. This type of coach is more interested in asking questions and listening than in telling (like Socrates in ancient Greece). Rather than hands-on technical experience, the “learning to learn” coach uses their broader expertise. They recognize the potential in people, and commit to giving them challenges and opportunities to stretch and learn how to learn. This sort of coaching is appropriate when there are many paths to a good result—not just one “right” approach. It’s particularly helpful when people are developing in new roles or working on new or unusual projects.

It’s possible for a person’s “natural” style to be on this continuum, but in the final analysis, be aware that the situation might call for a different approach if you want to achieve the best possible result.
5.5 The Differences between Coaching and Counseling

Whether you coach or whether you counsel depends on the level or degree of direction and control that a manager or supervisor wants to exert, based on an employee’s level of ability and willingness to perform a required job task. The table below illustrates the approach or style differences that can be adopted.

COACHING AND COUNSELING STYLE MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STYLE CHOICE CONSIDERATIONS</th>
<th>STYLES</th>
<th>SAMPLE STATEMENTS</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COUNSELING</td>
<td>Directing</td>
<td>Here’s what I want you to do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telling</td>
<td>It’s essential that you take this approach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persuading</td>
<td>Let me explain why this approach will be best.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convincing</td>
<td>Here’s why I think it’s best to take this approach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COACHING</td>
<td>Recommending and discussing</td>
<td>Here’s an alternative for you to consider that I think has merit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s discuss the alternatives. Then we’ll see which one you think is best.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td>What are the possible outcomes of the approach you’re considering?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s work together to choose whatever approach you think is best.</td>
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Hence, in a particular situation a manager or supervisor can select whether they want to adopt a counseling style (in which the employee is directed or told what they are doing or told what is wrong in their current approach) at one end of the continuum, or a coaching style that seeks to use a much more collaborative, joint problem-solving approach at the other.
5.6 Setting the Right Climate for Coaching

We coach to help someone. It might be to help an individual learn something new, or help them over some difficulties they have been having with their performance. It might be to help them rise above their own expectations, but it’s never to embarrass, punish, or push them around. If you’re not trying to help someone, you’re not coaching!

Coaching involves much more than identifying an opportunity, working out what a person’s particular needs are, and “going for it.” There might be a lot of temptation to jump in and make adjustments as you go, but most people who have tried to establish a coaching relationship by doing just that will tell you that it’s not the smart way to go about things.

To give your coaching intervention the best chance of success, you need to do your homework and make sure that the climate you establish helps the coaching to go forward positively. The pre-planning stage is critical.

Early on, the coach will typically come up with some sense of how performance can be improved.

How you introduce the idea is very important. If the person sees it as a criticism of what they’ve been doing instead of an opportunity to develop and grow, they will likely react negatively.

Of course, there are many other reactions that need to be carefully considered. What about the person’s age and experience? Might they feel embarrassed by being coached? What can you do to allay their fears and embarrassment? Are there any cultural or gender issues that might lead to confusion about your motives for coaching? What might they be and how can you address them?

Putting yourself in the other person’s shoes and thinking about whether or not they’ll welcome the opportunity you are offering them through coaching is a good step in the right direction. A key question to ask at this stage is: “Does the person trust me?” If your answer to the question is “no,” your chances of quickly building a good coaching relationship are not good. Trust is the basis of good coaching, but it has to be two-way: Not only does the person you are coaching have to trust you, but you have to trust them. You want the relationship to grow as a partnership—that’s how to make it a successful experience.

Trust is the key to overcoming initial defensiveness to coaching, but if you find the person you are trying to coach a bit “edgy” about the situation, you need to find out why they are that way. It’s tempting to try to make them feel better by telling them that everything’s going to be fine and they shouldn’t worry about it. However, this rarely works as a way of allaying fears or difficulties. What you need to do is gently probe for the reasons: Ask questions to open the person up, and get them to tell you what their concern is. By carefully questioning and listening to an individual’s answers, you should be able to find out exactly what it is that’s bothering them or holding them back. Then you can set their mind at ease or make some suggestions.
The process of overcoming defensiveness or resistance to the coaching you are offering can be helped if you have some understanding of the different ways people think, “hear,” and talk. This is how to build rapport with the person you are coaching. Rapport is a key ingredient to good coaching, because it helps you to influence the other person in a positive way.

When you are trying to build rapport, make sure that your face and body are not saying that you have negative feelings about what they have done or are doing. The effective coach should always try to smile and put the individual at ease by being at ease themselves.

It’s not a good time to try and build rapport with someone if you’re “up to your armpits in alligators” and wishing that you were doing something else. It is obviously wiser to pick a time when you can give people your undivided attention and are ready to work to gain their trust and confidence. One thing that can really help build rapport is to be self-revealing—to share experiences that are similar to the experiences of the person you’re coaching. Use first names and speak in normal conversational language when you coach.
5.7 Planning and Preparing to Coach

As we have seen, coaching does not typically work well when we jump in with little in the way of planning or preparation. Coaching an individual or a team requires some forethought so you can take advantage of coaching opportunities. If you are prepared, you can begin without delay to help them improve their performance, enhance their job skills, expand their job responsibilities, or reach their career aspirations.

Opportunities to coach crop up formally during the quarterly Performance Update, and informally on a regular basis in the course of work. In every case, the planning questions shown below should help you to structure each of these situations as good coaching opportunities. Use the Planning Questions form to review the important issues before conducting a Progressive Performance Update discussion (or any coaching discussion, for that matter).

- **What opportunities do you have to coach this individual?**
- **Why are they important?**
- **How can you use these opportunities to develop the employee’s potential?**
- **What specifically have you observed that has contributed to the situation?**
- **Which of the individual’s selected competencies to achieve success seems to be most in need of attention? Why?**
- **How can you tie this coaching to the employee’s interests and career aspirations?**
- **From your experience, what potential roadblocks will you need to overcome in order to achieve success in coaching for optimal performance?**
- **How will you overcome these roadblocks?**

Of course, making sure that you have answers to these questions before you start coaching an individual is only a start. An effective coach will add their own questions, drawing upon their own past experience and even developing their own checklists and forms (such as the one on the next two pages) to help guide the process and achieve the most positive outcomes possible.
PLANNING QUESTIONS

Instructions: Before conducting a coaching session, a formal Progressive Performance Update discussion, or an informal discussion, prepare by first answering the following questions:

Individual’s name: ________________________________________________________________

Manager’s name: ________________________________________________________________

What opportunities do you have to coach this individual?

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Why are they important?

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

How can you use these opportunities to develop the individual’s potential?

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

What specifically have you observed that has contributed to the situation?

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

(continued)
PLANNING QUESTIONS (concluded)

Which of the individual’s selected competencies to achieve success seems to be most in need of attention? Why?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

How can you tie this coaching to the individual’s interests and career aspirations?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Your Personal Roadblocks

From your experience, what potential roadblocks will you need to overcome in order to achieve success in coaching for optimal performance?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

How will you overcome these roadblocks?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
**Instruction to the coach/observer:** Use this Observation Form to make careful notes of specific things the individual did well. Note any suggestions for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Actions</th>
<th>Specific Behaviors and Phrases</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. State the purpose and importance of the discussion. Briefly explain the process.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ask for the individual’s opinion on how he/she is tracking progress toward goals, and how he/she can enhance performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Give feedback on the individual’s views, and describe actions or behaviors they believe have helped or contributed to the situation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ask the person for their target goals and possible milestones. Give feedback on the ideas and add your own.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Summarize actions to be taken, and set a day and time for the next update/discussion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Express confidence and support.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**COACHING OBSERVATION FORM**

**Instruction to the coach/observer:** Use this Observation Form to make careful notes of specific things the individual did well. Note any suggestions for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Principles</th>
<th>Specific Behaviors and Phrases</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Focus on the situation, issue, or behavior—not on the person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Help the individual maintain their self-confidence and self-esteem.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Help the individual maintain constructive relationships with peers and their manager.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Take the initiative to make things better.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lead by example.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.8 Analyzing Performance Problems
Coaching can be provided in a wide variety of situations, but in the context of performance management, it is most often used when there are performance shortfalls or problems. Ideally, your monitoring processes should provide information on performance that is going well and on performance that needs to be corrected. When performance is not on target, you need to be very specific: analyze and describe the specific performance that needs to be improved.

STEPS FOR ANALYZING PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS
These three simple steps can be used to analyze performance problems:

1. Identify the performance gap by describing the difference between required performance and actual performance.
2. Decide if corrective action is needed by identifying the importance of the performance gap.
3. Determine the cause of the gap.

STEP 1: Identifying the Performance Gap
You can identify performance gaps by describing the difference between the performance required for the job and the employee’s actual performance. This method helps to focus on the facts. You want to avoid falling into the trap of making hard-to-support observations such as “You work slow” or “You waste too much time.”

Examples of performance gaps:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Performance</th>
<th>Actual Employee Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep others informed of potential problems that can affect the release of a product or service.</td>
<td>Doesn’t inform manager or co-workers of problems that impact the release of a product or service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete reports by the 10th of the month.</td>
<td>Reports not handed in by 10th. Manager needs to keep reminding employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be at work by 8.30 A.M. each day.</td>
<td>Yesterday employee came to work at 8:50 A.M. Friday employee arrived at 8:45 A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production deadlines are met.</td>
<td>Deadline was missed four times in the last two weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve 100% of the sales plan.</td>
<td>Achieved 90% of sales plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively demonstrate the Cultural Diversity Awareness competency by not tolerating offensive discussions regarding race, religion, or sex in situations where offense can be taken.</td>
<td>Used ethnic joke to kick off sales meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 2: Deciding If Corrective Action Is Needed

After identifying the specific performance gap, you must decide if corrective action to eliminate the gap is necessary, and what approach you should take.

Since performance gaps ranging from minor annoyances to major crises happen all the time, you should ideally focus your time and efforts on correcting significant gaps by asking:

- What is the impact of the performance gap:
  - On the employee’s work?
  - On other people and their work?
  - On the work of the unit, department, or organization?
  - On customers?
  - On suppliers and other organizational partners?
- Could the gap result in a safety problem, a dangerous work situation, or violation of regulatory or even legal guidelines?
- Is the gap likely to close or become insignificant or perhaps worse with the passage of time?

STEP 3: Determining the Cause of the Performance Gap

You cannot take effective corrective action (by coaching or any other means) until you have determined why the individual is not doing what the organization wants him/her to do. There will probably be a variety of reasons; it is important that you identify them.

Reasons why employees don’t do what they’re supposed to do include:

- They don’t know how to do it.
- They don’t know why they should do it.
- They don’t know what they are supposed to do.
- They believe that your way will not work.
- They think their way is better.
- They think something else is more important.
- There is not a positive consequence for doing it.
- They think they are already doing it.
- They are rewarded for not doing it.
- They are punished for doing what they are supposed to do.
- They anticipate a negative consequence for doing it.
- There is no negative consequence (or no punishment) for not doing it.

Regardless of the reason cited, the coach must help the individual accept the cause of their performance shortfall, and then help them to commit to correcting the problem or finding an appropriate solution. This means creating a supportive and collaborative climate.
5.9 Creating a Supportive Climate for Communication

During all performance discussions with individuals, it’s important to create a supportive communication climate that motivates people to actively participate and helps them believe that you are genuinely interested in helping.

Creating a positive communication climate is not always easy—particularly if the individual has not asked for a coaching intervention or does not believe there is a problem. As a result, the coach needs to think carefully about the particular situation and do as much preparation as possible.

The list that follows presents the differences between a defensive and a supportive communication climate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defensive</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Manager:</td>
<td>The Manager:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comes across as a know-it-all</td>
<td>• Values the employee’s perception/ideas/experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is closed-minded</td>
<td>• Is open-minded and willing to explore ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Considers himself/herself superior to the employee</td>
<td>• Comes across as an equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is not really concerned about the employee</td>
<td>• Cares about the employee’s well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is judgmental (&quot;You should . . .&quot;)</td>
<td>• Describes performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Blames the employee for past performance</td>
<td>• Works with the employee to problem-solve in order to improve future performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides a one-way lecture</td>
<td>• Encourages two-way communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, the effective coach needs to adopt as many of the behaviors in the right-hand column as possible. This typically means making sure that the manager’s deeds match their words, and making sure that strong empathy and listening skills are developed and used.
5.10 Developing Active-Listening Skills

Active listening skills are a must for effective coaching. Active listening helps you to involve employees and to get their ideas and commitment on how to improve performance and how to continue developing their skills and competencies.

Active listening encourages two-way communication. It shows individuals that you value what they have to say; it motivates them to share information, ideas, concerns, and feelings; it prevents misunderstanding; it encourages creativity; it enhances learning; and it builds trust.

The following listening skills are used by good coaches during most coaching sessions:

- Reflect in your response that you listened to what the employee said. Paraphrase feelings as well as facts.
  
  *Example*: “It sounds as if you enjoyed working with Joe on that project.”

- Gather all necessary facts (by asking questions and restating) before reaching a conclusion or recommending a specific improvement.
  
  *Example*: “What are the specific areas of product knowledge you need to know more about?”

- Respond empathetically (patiently and non-judgmentally reflect the employee’s feelings).
  
  *Example*: “I understand that you’re concerned about learning the new system” instead of “The system’s so easy. Even a complete novice could learn to use it.”

- Do not interrupt. Let the individual finish what he/she has to say before you respond. Let the person vent or express themselves fully if needed.

- Use probing techniques and clarifying questions to determine the individual’s perceptions, needs, concerns, and ideas.
  
  *Example*: “What do you think you can do to gain more cooperation from the people in accounting?”

  or

  “What could you have done during the meeting to demonstrate the Flexibility competency?”

As with many things, good listening habits take lots of practice. Use the above approaches in all your coaching conversations.
5.11 Providing Positive Recognition

During a coaching discussion, it's always important to praise individual efforts. You want to reinforce good performance regarding job responsibilities and performance objectives that have been achieved or that are progressing well, and build on any critical competencies that have been demonstrated effectively.

Countless surveys point out that employees would be happier and more productive if their managers handed out words of praise more frequently. Employees often say that they'd work harder if they were occasionally told that they were doing a good job. A sincere pat on the back goes a long way in motivating people to perform effectively. People perform much better when they feel that they and their work are important and appreciated, and when they receive positive consequences for good performance.

WHEN TO GIVE RECOGNITION

In addition to giving recognition when an employee does an outstanding job, consider giving recognition when an employee:

- Consistently meets performance objectives.
- Consistently does a good job on routine tasks.
- Is learning a new job or task.
- Has improved his/her performance significantly in a short time frame.
- Has successfully accomplished a specific performance objective or completed a difficult task.
- Has made significant progress toward achieving a complex or long-term performance objective.
- Effectively demonstrates a particular competency.

Good coaches provide positive, frequent recognition when it has been earned. Recognition shows that a manager knows good work when he/she sees it, and that he/she appreciates it. It also helps the individual to feel that any appraisal of their entire performance is likely to be fair. In the long term, this means that they will come to trust the Performance Management System.
Giving frequent recognition is very important, but a manager or supervisor also needs to keep in mind the following broad guidelines about positive and constructive recognition:

- **Remember:** Actions that are praised and rewarded are likely to be repeated. If you take good performance or performance improvement for granted, it might not be repeated.

- **Be sincere and specific.** Describe what the employee did and why it was helpful (that is, how it positively impacted his/her or others’ performance results). If an individual feels that the recognition is not genuine or not deserved, they might actually resent anything that is said.

- **Understand that recognition builds an employee’s confidence and self-esteem and is likely to lead to repeat performance or behavior.**

- **By providing recognition, you’ll build trust and avoid having employees feel that the only time they hear from you is when they’ve done something wrong.** Managers who give praise when it’s been earned typically have employees who are more cooperative, more productive, and less defensive.
5.12 Providing Corrective Coaching Feedback

Providing corrective feedback involves giving employees constructive criticism on performance that needs to be improved. Constructive criticism is a necessary part of providing fair and balanced coaching to individuals. Individuals will typically expect a good coach to give them critical feedback.

We will deal with corrective feedback in much more detail in Module 7. In the context of coaching, however, we can safely say that corrective feedback helps to identify what needs to be improved, why improving it is important, and how it can be improved.

Giving corrective feedback is one of the most important responsibilities of a manager, but managers unfortunately hesitate in giving corrective feedback because they are afraid of:

- Hurting the employee’s feelings.
- Not being liked by the employee.
- Creating future resistance or defensiveness.
- Demotivating the employee.
- Damaging a good working relationship.
- Causing the employee to become defensive or angry.
- Being perceived as too hard.
- Causing performance to get worse.
- Confronting an uncomfortable situation.
- Being perceived as flaunting their authority.
- Becoming angry or losing control.
- Not knowing how to provide corrective feedback constructively.

In reality, these outcomes are extremely rare or limited. An effective coach should be able to manage the situation so that the individual can be quickly set on a positive path forward. It also means offering feedback in a calm, measured, clear way, so that the individual has no doubt about exactly what needs to improve.
CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

For corrective feedback to be useful, it should be:

- **Prompt**, rather than delayed. Don’t wait three months to discuss what needs to be done differently now.

- **Targeted** toward important rather than trivial issues. Discuss one or two things that would really improve the individual’s performance. Don’t nit-pick or overwhelm the person so that he/she feels that you are overly critical or that he/she is totally ineffective or is so demotivated that they want to give up trying.

- **Two-way**, rather than one-way. Get the individual’s perception of his/her strengths and areas that need improvement. Performance improvement involves two-way discussion, not a lecture.

- **Descriptive**, rather than judgmental. Discuss behaviors related to the job. Avoid discussing personality traits. Say, “You interrupted Bob three times during our discussion.” Don’t say, “You’re rude.”

- **Specific**, rather than general. Say, “Your last report was two days late,” instead of “Your reports need improvement.” That’s diplomatic, but it is facts that you want.

- **Helpful**, rather than destructive. Don’t give feedback when you’re angry, even if you are very concerned about what you observed in the individual’s performance. Wait an hour or, if necessary, a day. Think about what you’ll say and how you’ll say it in order to present your feedback in a fair and constructive way.

- **Focused** on problem-solving and improving for the future, not on blaming for the past. The idea is to identify specific things the individual can do differently in order to improve. Telling an individual that he or she would be a better customer service representative if he were smarter isn’t useful.

- **Developmental**, rather than remedial. Even a very effective employee can enhance his/her skills. Everyone benefits from ongoing, periodic coaching. It is not reserved for poor performers.

- **Balanced**. Be sure to provide recognition by praising the individual appropriately for things he/she does effectively, as well as for focusing on things that need to be done differently.
5.13 Guidelines for Giving Corrective Feedback

Individuals are more motivated to improve and are less defensive when their supervisors or managers balance the positives and the negatives of performance.

You should give corrective feedback by doing these things:

- State the positives of the individual’s performance in order to set a constructive climate and to reinforce good performance.
  
  **Examples:**
  - “What I especially like about the way you handled Tom’s objection was . . .”
  - “Your thorough technical knowledge came across effectively when you . . .”

- State the performance areas that need improvement as concerns or improvement opportunities, rather than problems.
  
  **Examples:**
  - “The competency that you need to demonstrate more consistently is Effective Delegation.”
  - “I’m concerned about how you handled the situation with Mary. I wish you had used your coaching skills to . . .”

- Mutually discuss and agree on specific steps the individual will take to improve performance. Either you or the individual concerned should summarize next steps.
  
  **Examples:**
  - “So, we agreed that there are two competencies that you’ll focus on developing: teamwork and communication skills. You’d like to develop these by . . .”
  - “So, as we discussed, you will be sure to wear safety glasses in all designated areas.”

- End on a positive note.
  
  **Example:**
  - “Thanks for your constructive attitude, Helen. I am sure that we can help one another to achieve better results in the future, based on this conversation.”

You should always remember that when you coach individuals in either formal or informal situations, you need to be aware of how you come across. What you meant (your intent) is not always what the employee heard (the effect). For example, if you say to an employee, “You should do it this way,” you might intend to be helpful and show the individual an easier way to do the job, but the person might interpret the message as, “You dummy!” depending on the tone of your voice and your facial and hand gestures. The effect will probably be demotivating. It’s important to remember that **how** you say something is as important as **what** you say.

As we suggested at the outset, if a supervisor or manager uses coaching to merely point out things that are wrong or to take enjoyment in criticizing individuals, this is not coaching! To qualify as coaching, the coach always needs to carefully listen to the individuals they are seeking to coach, and strike a healthy balance.

Provide recognition for good performance, give corrective feedback, and always be aware of how you are coming across. Those are key requirements for an effective coach. By doing this, you will create a supportive coaching environment that will help people truly succeed.
5.14 Coaching Development Methods
As we have already discussed, coaching should ideally be used as a method to collaboratively help an individual to develop or to help them raise their overall level of performance. Although there are a variety of coaching methods and interventions that can be made, listed below are examples of possible development methods that can be used in different circumstances.

Practical one-to-one on-the-job coaching:
- Work one-on-one with the individual on the job to encourage, guide, and teach him/her. (Show him/her how to operate a piece of equipment or how to communicate effectively with a group of people, for example.)

Redesigning parts of the job:
- Delegate more responsibility to the individual.
- Review the priority of the individual’s assigned duties or tasks.
- Provide opportunities for the individual to strengthen competencies (identifying how the employee can take initiative or to improve their analytical skills, for example).
- Remove constraints that interfere with the individual’s performance (excessive administration or unnecessary paperwork, for example). This allows people more time to focus on more important tasks or issues.
- Provide opportunities for the individual to supervise, coach, or mentor others (working with new employees, trainees, contractors, or students).

Self-development activities:
- Ask the individual to prepare and deliver a presentation internally or externally (for a sales meeting, for a college or school, for a professional association, etc.).
- Provide opportunities for the individual to participate in or manage a committee or task force.
- Encourage the individual to participate actively in professional organizations or community activities.
- Encourage the individual to subscribe to or read professional journals, periodicals, or books.

Formal training programs:
- Recommend programs within the organization or externally (a university degree program or course, for example).

When you coach, you need to be very clear about why you are coaching and what might be the appropriate process or method to help the individual learn and improve. This is not just because people have different learning needs and styles, but also because the coaching method needs to match the situation as closely as possible in order to be effective.

There are five basic coaching methods you should consider when you are about to coach someone. Each of the five has a different application, depending on why the coaching is taking place. However, you might well use all the methods over the course of one coaching session.
The five coaching methods are:

- Role modeling (demonstrating and showing): “Do as I do” or helping the employee to see an approach applied in practice
- Instructing (telling or lecturing): “Do as I say.”
- Performance/target setting (challenging or stretching): “Do it to this level/standard.”
- Critical thinking/creative problem-solving (joint identification of issues and resolution): “Let’s find a solution.”
- Enthusiastic motivation/inspiration (strong encouragement and support): “You can do it!”

None of these coaching methods are unique, nor do they need to be used exclusively. You can mix and match two or more or use them all with the same person, if it is appropriate to do so.
5.15 Matching the Coach to the Individual

The supervisor or manager is often the obvious coach in a performance management situation. This can work well, but it might be appropriate to involve third parties in the coaching process, or someone who is likely to help the individual more than the manager can.

This can be a short-term coach for specific expertise or project-handling skills, or a longer-term mentor. In either case, if this path of choosing a third-party coach is selected by either the individual or the manager, there are some general ground rules that should be followed. The individual also needs to ask some searching questions of the potential coach at the outset, so that a good match is made and the relationship has a good chance of succeeding.

Use the following basic questions to make sure that an effective coaching climate is established between an individual and a third-party coach internal to the enterprise or externally hired:

- **Ask about the coach as a person.** Do you feel positively about the coach when you first meet? Does he or she listen to what you want to accomplish? Does he or she ask questions? Do you feel you can connect? Do you feel you can trust this person? Are you willing to share your aspirations, desires, dreams, thoughts, and feelings with this person?

- **Ask about the process and techniques that are likely to be used.** Is the coaching process or method likely to be standardized or generic, or is it going to be customized or tailored to your way of learning and responding to issues? What specific techniques might be used? (These will vary from coach to coach, but go with the one that seems to fit most with you.) How long is the process likely to take? How much time is needed? (The responses will vary, depending on your desired results and how much effort, time, and personal resources you are prepared to commit to your personal development.)

- **Ask about their experience and background.** What training have they had in the coaching process? What's their educational background? How many people have they coached? How many years have they been coaching? What types of people have they coached? In other words, what gives them the right to call themselves a coach? What gives them the right to work with you?

- **Assure confidentiality.** Verify that the coach will keep your relationship confidential, as well as whatever you discuss (unless you give explicit permission for the nature of your relationship to be revealed). Also make sure that the coach has no conflicts of interests in helping or assisting you.

- **Ask about the logistics.** Is the coach available to work with you? When will the sessions be scheduled? Where will the sessions take place? Will the coaching take place in person, or by telephone? How much flexibility does the coach have? What's the cancellation approach likely to be? Is the time and place convenient for you? Is there a quick way to make telephone or electronic-mail contact?
THE SKILLS AND EXPERTISE OF A GOOD COACH

An effective coach (whether it is the manager of an employee or a mentor/third-party coach) should demonstrate a range of skills. The following are some general behaviors/approaches that the individual should always look for:

The Ability to Build Strong Relationships and Build Trust

A good coach should be able to:

- Communicate high expectations for individuals and have faith in their abilities to perform well.
- Avoid comparing the performance of the person they are coaching to the performance of someone else. A good coach treats each individual as a unique situation, and adjusts their coaching style accordingly.
- Avoid jumping in until there is a relationship with the person being coached. A good coach works on the relationship until the coaching is over.
- When they do not know the answer to a question, a good coach admits it and offers to find the answer and provide it by the next coaching session.
- Relate real life experiences and stories (using “I” and not the generic “you” to talk about themselves).
- Raise the individual’s status. A good coach should know that the individual being coached is likely to say things that the coach wants to hear. The coach is held in high regard.
- Honestly examine the role to be played. A good coach examines whether they want to be a constant nag, a bully, a friend, a critic, a mentor, a leader, a teacher, a manager, a counselor, a disciplinarian, or a role-model (or even to play multiple roles).
- Be available when needed by the individual, and offer time.
- Admit failure. A good coach should be able to “model” a key component of lifelong learning by being honest with their own performances, and use them as an opportunity for learning.
The Ability to Frame the Coaching Process

A good coach should be able to:

- Believe in people’s willingness to want to do the best they can. If the coach doesn’t believe this, they should not be engaged in coaching.
- See coaching as a two-way process—not a one-sided initiative. Good coaches see coaching to be a dialogue, a give-and-take relationship, a chance to share ideas and information. The coach does not have to be the initiator of the process or a conversation; the individual can and should sometimes take the lead.
- See coaching as something other than therapy or training or consulting (although each has its appropriate place).
- See coaching to be best delivered in situationally relevant ways. Good coaches consider the difficulty of the task, the skills and experience of the person they are coaching, and their preferences in terms of how much help should be given. If the individual does not want/need “the answer,” they will need a little assistance in finding out how to get the answer themselves.
- Encourage peer coaching by occasionally inviting individuals to find a partner or mentor to help in action planning or implementation activities.

The Ability to Set Goals and Targets

A good coach should be able to:

- Get a solid commitment from the individual to reach her/his goal. This can be done in a number of ways, such as sending a short note to her/his colleagues and superiors, telling them that she/he wants to improve (specify what) and asking for their feedback and their support.
- Sensibly set stretching targets and goals (typically at somewhere between one-third and one-half more than a person says they can do over a period of time). This often greatly increases the chances of success.
The Ability to Identify and Analyze Areas for Coaching

A good coach should be able to:

- Assess the abilities and experience of the person being coached, and act accordingly.
- Offer three kinds of feedback—what people should keep doing (positive feedback), what they should stop doing (negative feedback), and what they should start doing (new-ideas feedback).
- Coach only on real and first-hand data: Coaches quickly lose credibility if they try to coach someone on performance or behaviors that have been identified by a third party when they have not checked out and/or verified the information themselves.
- Identify the Individual's needs: Getting an individual to buy into a performance improvement idea is like getting a potential customer to buy a product or service. The more you know about their values, attitudes, beliefs, objectives, challenges, and development goals, the more credibly and persuasively the coach can offer their performance-improvement ideas.
- Give people useful projects or “homework” between coaching sessions: Ask individuals to write down their victories or the things that they have done well every day for a week. The next time the coach meets with them, this list can be used as the basis for the discussion, and the most meaningful items can be identified. Simple exercises such as these help people being coached to quickly identify their own development of key skills, and teach them to focus on their most important daily activities. It also allows them to see their accomplishments and successes.
- Creatively invite the person being coached to make suggestions on what they specifically want to work on and why (and what steps they feel would help them).
- Ask the individual to summarize their issue, problem, or challenge (or specify the goal) in a single sentence (and keep probing the individual until she or he is able to do this). This discussion helps the individual clarify the situation and identify the critical factors that need focus and attention.
- Adapt their managerial/coaching style to the individual and diagnose what style is likely to work best in the circumstances.
The Ability to Conduct Effective Coaching Conversations

A good coach should be able to:

- Avoid sitting across the table from the person they are coaching (because this suggests an adversarial relationship). They should be comfortable sitting side by side or at a right angle to the other person.
- Avoid coaching when they are upset or in a lousy mood (and so avoid taking out their frustrations on the individual). They should be able to wait until they are calm and “centered.”
- Readily recognize when the person being coached is upset.
- Regularly ask the individual being coached for ideas, and listen actively and attentively. They should also only offer their ideas after the individual has completed his or her comments.
- Avoid over-planning and over-rehearsing coaching sessions. A good coach should have a general idea of the individual’s goal and invite suggestions on the process.
- Resist the temptation to ask, “Why?” too much in a coaching conversation. (Many individuals react to “Why?” as a blaming or fault-finding question.)
- Avoid giving too much personal advice. Advice usually brings out the “Yes, but . . .” response.
- Avoid negatives that potentially discourage people, such as “I don’t think . . .” and “You shouldn’t . . .” when speaking. Negatives tend to put people on the defensive. Instead, encourage and include with phrases that start with “What if we tried to . . .” or “Maybe you could . . .” or “Another option might be . . .,” etc.
- Encourage individuals to think back on their experiences and lessons learned, and discuss the implications of the experience for future behavior.
- Acknowledge and show appreciation for the person’s contribution, no matter how small, in every coaching situation.
- Openly ask the individual for feedback about their coaching performance at the end of a coaching session, and readily model appropriate behaviors for receiving feedback (and subsequently change their behavior during their next coaching conversation).

The Ability to Deal with Resistance or Defensiveness

A good coach should be able to:

- Avoid assuming that the individual’s reluctant or nervous responses are merely signs of resistance and defensiveness to be simply ignored or overcome—just because they are different from what they may want him or her to say. These statements should ideally be seen as genuine and valuable indicators of how an individual feels, and might offer clues on possible future remedial actions that can be taken.
- Be willing to lead from example or be an exemplar (modeling the desired behavior, and not expecting the person being coached to do something they will not do themselves).
The Ability to Give (and Receive) Feedback

A good coach should be able to:

- Spend more time getting an individual to demonstrate his or her skills, and provide appropriate feedback.
- Begin each feedback session by asking, “What did you do that makes you feel positive, uplifted, proud, etc.?”
- Be open to receiving feedback on their coaching style and methods. The best coaches continually learn and adapt.
- Describe why a particular skill/behavior is important for improved performance, and readily outline the steps/expectations/objectives/outcomes involved.
- Catch people doing the “right” things—not just the “wrong” ones.
- Engage in straight talk with the person being coached—this means observing the individual doing something ineffectively, telling them so directly, asking them to analyze the situation for themselves, and then reflecting back (including a description of the ineffective behavior and what they might try differently in the future).
- Provide encouragement and support each step along the way, giving feedback when appropriate to help build upon each success, no matter how small.
- Offer praise to individuals on their strengths and areas they can improve in.
- Find something positive to say when the person being coached fails. This gives them an anchor to hold on to. No one likes to fail. A good coach helps people to fail with their dignity intact and take away a positive learning experience.

The Ability to Conclude Coaching Conversations Positively

A good coach should be able to:

- Consider the long-term relationship with the person being coached to be all-important. More important than being “right” or feeling “justified” is to have the individual leave the coaching session looking forward to returning for more.
- End their coaching sessions by asking the individual to list two or three of the most important things he or she has learned. This will reinforce learning and help the individual feel satisfied with the learning process.
- Avoid forgetting to follow up. After a coaching session or project is completed, a good coach will work with the individual to develop an action plan for his or her continuous personal and professional growth.
### 5.16 Coaching Do’s and Don’ts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide coaching throughout the year.</td>
<td>Don’t wait until the Annual Performance Review discussion to provide feedback on performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember to catch individuals doing something right. Provide recognition for good work.</td>
<td>Don’t look for and discuss only what’s going wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a positive tone and climate. Communicate positive expectations that the individual is valuable and can further improve performance.</td>
<td>Don’t make the individual feel like a loser, a hopeless case, or a thorn in your side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage an open dialogue. Get the individual involved.</td>
<td>Don’t talk at the individual, lecture, or give lots of “If I were you . . .” advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be sure to discuss the individual’s strengths as well as improvement needs.</td>
<td>Don’t nit-pick or focus only on the negative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the performance gap in a non-judgmental manner (required vs. expected performance).</td>
<td>Don’t attack the individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be willing to help, and remember that the individual is responsible for improving performance.</td>
<td>Don’t put the individual on the defensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be patient and constructive.</td>
<td>Don’t conduct a coaching session when you are angry. Don’t vent your frustration and disappointment on the individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember that coaching is developmental and focused on problem-solving.</td>
<td>Don’t view coaching as remedial or as a punishment for the individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide recognition when performance improvement has occurred. Encourage continued improvement.</td>
<td>Don’t take improvement for granted.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
5.17 Summary
This module has suggested that well-planned coaching interventions can be an extremely valuable part of the ongoing success of the performance management process. We have emphasized that coaching is not a vehicle through which to engage in one-way telling, criticizing, punishing, or embarrassing people.

The best coaches build their success on a strong foundation of:

- Trust
- Two-way, open communication
- Integrity and fairness
- Honesty and straight-talk
- Patience
- Collaboration

Each of these factors takes time to establish, and requires high levels of commitment between the coach and the individual concerned. However, as we have seen in this module, hard work and regular discussion (formal and informal) throughout the coaching process can help individuals and their teams considerably.
The Performance Update is an excellent formal and scheduled vehicle to systematically create a culture within which all individuals have a genuine feeling of ownership for the results, where objective, candid, specific, and timely performance feedback via coaching can become the norm.
# Module Six
## Conducting a Performance Update Discussion

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Module Six
Conducting a Performance Update Discussion

6.1 About This Module
Good performance appraisals are much more than annual, end-of-cycle affairs that managers and individuals enter with trepidation. The appraisal should be a vibrant and regular discussion process, with both parties feeling positive about the experience.

This module of the Janus Performance Management System provides some simple and practical advice about how to go about conducting regular performance update discussions. In it, we emphasize the need for high levels of preparation and a structured process that helps both managers and appraisees engage in the formal, positive meetings that should occur at regular intervals and then work together to achieve the best possible results. Most importantly, this involves setting up an open two-way dialogue in which adjustments can be made to a manager’s expectations and/or an individual’s performance, as required in the review. This means that performance can be kept more readily on track. “Surprises” about differences of opinion regarding results achieved can be minimized during end-of-cycle discussions.
6.2 The Performance Update Discussion

In the goal-setting discussions (see Module 3), managers and their people should have ideally agreed on the key accountabilities for the coming year. Measurement processes, specific targets, and a first-quarter focus on key results and activities should also have been set and the onus placed on individuals to monitor their own performance and determine for themselves whether or not they are on track.

Now people are out there doing the job, but while they receive performance feedback directly from their measurement system, they still require direct feedback from their manager. **Good performance needs to be reinforced!** Performance gaps need to be addressed. The supervisor must be able to move from the role of manager as “appraiser” to the role of manager as “coach,” and perform this role well within the context of a formal performance update discussion.

Performance coaching (as discussed in Module 5) is the art of getting people to stretch themselves toward and beyond their personal targets, and getting individuals to develop and grow beyond their expectations. In a performance management situation, good coaches make use of all possible opportunities: informal work progress discussions, formal performance reviews, and the numerous impromptu “coachable” moments that occur regularly in the course of a work day. Good coaches collaborate with individuals in developing their potential.

In coaching, you go beyond merely pointing out performance gaps and urging staff to shape up. Instead, you stress to team members the importance of analyzing personal performance and taking steps to make it better. At the same time, coaches (in the way they work with their teams) model exactly how to go about improving performance.

As we saw in Module 5, when you take a coaching approach as part of the performance update discussion, you continually build up the skill and motivation base of the people whom you are trying to help. The result is a better equipped team that can provide the flexibility and built-in capability you need. In addition, you tap into the inherent, self-driven motivation of people to personally succeed. Not only do individuals consequently become more willing and able, but your time is freed up to devote to other leadership activities (leaving the individual to put into practice the suggestions you have made, and to make improvements where they can before the next progress update discussion).

Unfortunately, some managers have in the past avoided the coaching approach to performance management, claiming that they don’t have the time, that it feels awkward, or that it will make their people feel that something is seriously wrong. Others have avoided it because they don’t really care much whether their people develop or not. Ultimately, the consequences of not coaching, particularly at times when individuals are actively looking for help and support, is that the non-coaches and their teams suffer because employees are not as skilled or motivated as they could be. People are under-used and simply do only what it takes to get by. And that’s not enough in the competitive world in which most organizations must now operate.

As we have already stressed, coaching (formal and informal) needs to be a key feature of our work environment.
To help overcome what seems to be a reluctance to engage in coaching activity, consider the Performance Update as an excellent formal and scheduled vehicle to systematically create a culture where all individuals feel genuine ownership in the results, and where objective, candid, specific, and timely performance feedback via coaching can become the norm.

The Performance Update should not be rated (ratings can tend to put people in a defensive mode). The sole objective of the Performance Update is to keep people on track, to maintain optimal performance, to pay attention to performance issues or problems, and to make sure that every individual has the opportunity to succeed in their role and maximize their contribution. Of course, this is easily said. In practice, we need to make sure that a progress update discussion is a well-managed process. To do this, we need to consider what is involved, in some detail.
6.3 What You (the Supervisor or Manager) Need to Do to Prepare for the Performance Update Discussion

A Performance Update (often conducted on a quarterly basis, but possibly scheduled more or less frequently than this) should be planned for a date no earlier than two weeks before the end of the quarter and no later than two weeks following the end of the quarter.

Both the supervisor/manager and individual appraisee should prepare carefully for the meeting, making written notes wherever possible.

The individual should ideally record their notes on a Performance Update form (see next page). This form typically records:

- How he/she has progressed against that quarter’s focus activities and targets
- Any business changes or roadblocks that currently or might in the future prevent him/her from meeting the agreed-on goals
- The activities and milestones they intend to work toward in the coming quarter.

The manager should ideally prepare by noting the specific behaviors or actions that they have observed that have contributed to the individual’s success (or otherwise) for each target or competency area that was selected at the outset.

In summary, in order to prepare satisfactorily for a Performance Update, the manager should consider the following checklist items:

- Assessing the individual’s performance in the job
- Preparing the structure of the discussion
- Preparing the individual prior to the meeting
- Helping the individual to understand the system
- Developing an understanding of the competencies that apply to the individual job
- Planning so as to use the time effectively

Use the Key Actions outlined later in this module to lead discussions during the Performance Update meeting.
## PERFORMANCE UPDATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: ____________________</th>
<th>Title: Team Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review period: Quarter 1</td>
<td>Location: ______________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager’s name: ____________</td>
<td>Manager’s title: ___________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quarter Focus Activities and Milestones**
Record here the first-quarter focus data from the plan or the previous Quarterly Performance Update form.

| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |

**Results/Achievements**
Record here the results regarding the first-quarter focus activities and milestones.

| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |

**Roadblocks Faced; Upcoming Issues**
Record here any issues that prevented the individual from hitting the targets for this accountability AND/OR any issues that are likely to affect progress toward your next-quarter or Full Year targets.

| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |

**Next-Quarter Focus Activities and Milestones**
Record here the activities and milestones that form the focus for the next quarter.

| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |
| __________________________________________ |

Employee’s signature: _______________________________ Date:___________________
Evaluator’s signature:________________________________ Date:___________________

The employee and manager should each retain a copy of this form.
6.4 How You (the Supervisor or Manager) Need to Go about Conducting a Successful Performance Update Discussion

A Performance Update discussion is not successful just because you got the paperwork out of the way. The quality of the preparation, discussion, and activities that result are typically what count more than any other factor.

As we have already suggested in the Janus Performance Management System, it is the individual appraisee’s responsibility to record their results to date and to make their supervisor aware of factors that have or might impact performance. However it is the supervisor’s responsibility to provide effective feedback and coaching and, where necessary, to review performance expectations (in the light of what has been presented and discussed). Both parties need to be flexible in this discussion. The supervisor should be open to the fact that circumstances might have changed or that new issues might have arisen since the original objectives were set (and should accept that performance outcomes might fall short of expectations). Equally, the appraisee needs to be open to the fact that their chosen approach in tackling some objectives might not have been ideal, and accept the feedback as a way of learning how to make adjustments the next time that they face a similar situation.

To help in this discussion process, the supervisor or manager can use the Planning Questions (shown at the end of this module). You should then review the Key Actions before leading a Performance Update discussion. The Key Actions described in this module are designed to increase a manager’s effectiveness when they lead a Performance Update discussion. (They will help to make the experience a better one for both parties involved in the process.)

Managers and the individuals being appraised always need to remember that a periodic progress review meeting is a positive opportunity to share information and engage in healthy two-way communication about achieving better results. As a result, it should be seen as an opportunity to agree on positive paths forward, and not be used as a time to apportion blame for goals or deadlines that are now unachievable.
6.5 What You (the Employee) Need to Think about before the Performance Update Discussion

Today, progressive and competitively focused organizations encourage and ask their employees to take ownership for their own performance and individual career development, and to actively participate in any discussions about progress. The regular Performance Update discussion is a regularly scheduled time for the individual and supervisor or his or her manager to check on objectives and discuss any roadblocks.

In order to achieve their objectives and deliver a high degree of performance, the individual needs to:

- Be aware of his/her impact on others.
- Be clear about his/her priorities.
- Manage his/her time in a whole-life sense.
- Assess his/her capacity to manage pressure.

In other words, the discussion will be useful as long as the individual thinks carefully about their performance in the wider context of the team and of the entire enterprise of which they are a part.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR IMPACT ON OTHERS

You can understand your individual impact on others by taking the following suggestions:

- Gain feedback from friends, family, and colleagues.
- Use the 360-degree feedback questionnaire regularly (it is a standard part of the Janus System).
- Regularly analyze your strengths and limitations, and compare them to those of others in the organization.
- Find a mentor or coach within or external to the organization who can help you understand yourself.
- Reflect by asking yourself what kind of impression you and your team would give to a complete stranger or an external customer.
- Think about the impression you would like to make.
- Think about how you can adjust or change your approach to get the best out of yourself and/or others.
6.6 How You (the Employee) Need to Go about Preparing for a Performance Update Discussion

SETTING PRIORITIES
As a way of analyzing your priorities, well before any performance or progress discussion takes place, try to understand what is being asked of you in your present role.

Mind mapping, which has been taught to graduate students at Harvard University and other institutions for many years, is an excellent visual way of identifying your priorities and preparing yourself mentally for the upcoming conversation.

Simple instructions: Using a blank sheet of paper, draw an image at the center to represent your job or role. Draw some branches off this to represent the elements of your job, and then some smaller branches that represent each of your key roles. Use different-colored pens for each branch and all its connections. A simple example to help you get started is shown below.

What follows is a mind map for Paul, a sales manager. Paul works for a sales director in a medium-sized company in the finance industry. Paul feels that he is overworked and that he often reacts to problems, rather than preventing them.
Paul’s overall mind map looks like this:

Paul’s mind-map experience helps him to structure his thinking and become clear about any issues he wants to make notes about or discuss during any performance review meeting.

Analyzing a mind map can help any individual understand how they are managing their current performance and what they need to focus on in the future. Use the following questions to guide you in your mind-map analysis:

- Look at your key job roles. What percentage of your time do you spend on each? (Make a note of this on your map.)
- Indicate on your map the tasks you like (+) and dislike (−), with a number of pluses or minuses indicating the degree of like and dislike.
- Next, consider your personal effectiveness—the tasks you are good at.
- Now circle the tasks you could delegate to others or do in a different way.
- Finally, identify areas where you would benefit from some form of learning or ongoing development in order to improve your skills or competencies.
If we look carefully at Paul’s case, we see that he realized that he needed to delegate more, and coach his people in order for them to take on greater responsibilities. By doing this, Paul will have more time to focus on the overall scheduling for his business unit, and be able to take a more proactive role.

Paul also realized that he needed to manage upwards, and influence the sales strategy and resources available to his team.

Finally, he decided that he needed some development in the area of sales strategy, as well as some coaching regarding his influencing skills.

Mind mapping is not the only way to reflect on performance, but it is a remarkably flexible and simple methodology that is worth trying at least once. Another mind map that can be drawn is to take the competencies that were selected at the beginning of the appraisal cycle and make each one a branch of the mind map on its own—to draw in positive ways that competencies have been enhanced or improved, and even to identify gaps that need to be addressed in the future.

**SETTING PRIORITIES AND DOING ACTION PLANNING**

Action Planning is covered in more detailed terms in Module 10 of this manual. However, we will briefly outline the action steps that are always necessary after each progress meeting, since it is an essential component of the Performance Update discussion.

Having developed a mind map (or equivalent) of their role or their progress in developing their competencies, individuals can review the map and determine the messages that it is providing about how they manage their own performance and what they can do to enhance it.

For the purposes of action planning, the questions that should be asked here are:

1. How will you spend or manage your time in the future?
2. What tasks and activities will you delegate to others?
3. How will you manage your career in the medium- to long-term?
4. What learning and development activities will you plan for yourself (and discuss and confirm with your supervisor or manager)?

**MANAGING YOUR TIME AND CREATING A BALANCED LIFE**

To manage your time in a meaningful way, individuals ideally need to identify the things that they value in their life: career, health, well-being, family, friends, travel, learning, etc. and build them into an everyday to-do list. By being clear about what we really want, we can incorporate these things into our overall approach to time management (and the priorities that we therefore set).

Only three percent of the population actually writes down their goals, whether they are short-, medium-, or long-term goals. Goal-setting and time management go hand in hand. If you need a refresher in how to set realistic goals and objectives, please go back to Module 3.
ASSESSING AND ADJUSTING YOUR CAPACITY TO MANAGE PRESSURE AND STRESS

Managing pressure and personal levels of stress is part of 21st century living, so we’d better get used to it. We all feel stressed at times; the secret lies in the balance of our energy and the challenges we are facing.

Let’s look at the various levels of pressure or stress.

**Peak performance** This is where your energy level matches the challenge you face. It is extremely difficult to sustain this level for long periods of time.

**Burnout** You might experience a feeling of exhaustion, where you are unable to match your energy with the challenge presented.

**Distress** You might experience boredom, discomfort, and stress because you are not being challenged.

**Re-charge** This is generally at the end of the day, where you seek peace and relaxation so as to “re-charge your batteries” for the next day and the next challenge.

It is important to regularly reflect and assess what level you are at throughout your working day, week, and month. In many circumstances, individuals need to reflect and plan their life so as to gain a balance between work, family, and social pursuits so that you can match energy levels and the challenges presented to you in your job and long-term career. If any of these are out of balance, the Progress Update discussion is an ideal time to raise any issues and agree on a different approach for the future.
6.7 The Performance Update Form

As we suggested at the outset, a strong and effective performance management system seeks to document progress and prevent confusion or misunderstanding between a manager and an appraisee.

The Performance Update provides an ongoing and thorough review of individual and organizational progress on meeting accountabilities and targets. It is all about keeping people on track, identifying any performance issues early, and then doing something about them before they become more serious. It is also a great opportunity for an individual to highlight additional achievements or projects (or new ones) not yet discussed or reviewed.

The individual should obviously complete the Performance Update form BEFORE they come to the progress discussion.

The Performance Update form itself is designed to be simple. It is intended as a summary document only. The Performance Update form essentially has two purposes. Just like the Janus logo, it looks back at the past and looks forward to the future. Hence, these components are:

1. A review component. (What were the expectations, and what was achieved?)
2. A forecasting component. (What are the potential roadblocks, and what will be achieved in the coming quarter?)

The Performance Update process provides the manager with an ideal coaching opportunity. The completed Update form is helpful, as well: It becomes a critical resource at end-of-year appraisal time for:

- **Employees:** The three completed Performance Update forms (assuming the updates are done quarterly) become the principal background data an employee uses to write their Annual Performance Appraisal.

- **Supervisors/Managers:** The three completed Performance Update forms and the planning information collected for each meeting are the basis upon which final judgments on performance are made. Three completed discussions allow managers to look at the entire year’s performance, rather than just the period immediately preceding the end-of-cycle Performance Appraisal.

- **Human Resource or Appraisal Administration Managers:** Having three completed Performance Update forms on file provides the Performance Appraisal process with quality-checks for equity and fairness. Of course, not every enterprise will have an administration department or section. However, this documentation can be readily placed in the employee’s file for later reference by the manager or the individual.

The manager and employee should each keep a copy of the completed update form that they use so one is always available in the event that one person’s notes on the discussions are not accurate or acceptable to both parties in the discussion. Don’t forget: This documentation process is designed to help provide structure and focus for the discussion, as well as to provide a record of what was said or agreed to.
Module Six: Conducting a Performance Update Discussion

6.8 Conducting a Performance Update Discussion

The following specific Key Actions have been developed to make sure that both the manager and the individual they are appraising have an effective and efficient meeting. It should be noted that these key actions are only a guide; they can be amended or modified as much or as little as you feel is necessary.

UPDATE DISCUSSION: KEY ACTIONS

1. State the purpose and importance of the discussion. Briefly explain the process.
2. Start with the first goal, target, or accountability. Ask for the individual’s opinion on how he/she is tracking against the quarterly target and how he/she can potentially enhance performance.
3. Give feedback on the individual’s views, and describe actions or behaviors you believe have helped or contributed to the situation.
4. Ask the employee for their focus activities and milestones for the next three months. Give feedback on the individual’s ideas, and add your own.
   (Move to the next accountability, goal, target, etc., repeating Key Actions 2, 3, and 4 until all goals and accountabilities have been reviewed. Then move to Key Action 5.)
5. Summarize the actions to be taken, and set a day and time for the next Performance Update.
6. Express confidence in the individual and offer support.

Each of these steps is explained in more detail on the following pages. However, remember that these action steps are only a guide. Every one-to-one discussion is unique; the parties can choose to adopt all, some, or even none of these steps, or invent a new approach of their own.
KEY ACTION 1
State the purpose and importance of the discussion. Briefly explain the process.

Why: As a manager, you want to develop individuals so they know how to focus on the right things in the right order, at the right time, with the right skills. If you introduce the discussion in an open and friendly manner and explain how you would like to lead the discussion, it will help prevent the person from feeling overwhelmed or as if they are under the microscope. Spelling out the purpose of the discussion and how it will be structured will help all parties quickly settle down to business, even when the manager and appraisee are friends.

Take the time to introduce the purpose and importance of the meeting and explain the process, so you can gauge how the individual is feeling about their performance and, just as importantly, about themselves in general. You might do this as a matter of course, but remember that it is always a good way to start the discussions.

How: Describe briefly that this is an opportunity for the employee to update you on their progress and highlight any issues that they are facing or might face in the future regarding any of their objectives or particular accountabilities.

Remind the appraisee that there is no rating applied to the Progress Update; it is a way to make sure that everyone is successful in their roles, and a good time to agree on any adjustments to targets or necessary changes in performance expectations.

State that you intend to discuss each of their goals or accountabilities in turn, with the end result being that the individual has a plan for the activities and milestones he or she will focus on over the next three months (quarter). Also state that you would like to discuss progress in the specific competencies that have been previously identified and selected.

You might wish to ask a general question on how the individual thinks they are performing in order to gauge their degree of nervousness or self-confidence, which will in turn help you apply an appropriate tone in your language and behavior.
KEY ACTION 2
Start with the first goal or accountability: Ask for the individual’s opinion on how he/she is progressing toward the next milestone regarding activities and targets, and how he/she can enhance performance.

- Formally recognize “on target” performance.
- This is the individual’s chance to identify roadblocks or issues.
- Reinforce the importance of closing any performance gap.

Why: The purpose of this key action is to encourage the individual to take the initiative in analyzing their own performance. It helps them to pause, to get off “auto-pilot,” and to evaluate their own progress. It also helps to increase the individual’s sense of responsibility for their own actions and their own development.

Seeking the person’s opinion gives you first-hand information about their perspective. It then becomes much easier to build the rapport and empathy required in a coaching or feedback-giving situation.

How: Use open-ended questions that are phrased to encourage thoughtful and objective analysis on the individual’s part. The person should have identified current or potential roadblocks prior to the meeting. Your role as manager here is to help them plan to either crash through or work around those roadblocks.

Roadblock: Coaching an individual who doesn’t trust you

If an individual is uncertain of your intentions, he or she will probably not be willing to open up about their own needs or share any ideas for improvement. Coaching produces the best results when the employee feels confident that what they say will not be used against them.

Successful coaching discussions grow out of manager-appraisee relationships that are built on mutual respect and trust. If your relationship with an individual is strained, is not well established, or is not on solid ground for one reason or another, don’t expect them to embrace your attempts at coaching right away. Even if it takes 2–3 discussions, they will eventually recognize your perseverance and commitment to the process and the individual.

In the meantime, continue by giving ongoing performance feedback and personally recognizing and reinforcing work well done.

Formally recognize “on target” performance.

Why: It is all too easy to focus on performance gaps and to think of on-target performance as what was expected anyway. But remember, the bar on performance should ideally be raised every year or so. On-target performance is good performance when it is what is expected. Feeling appreciated is one of the most important motivations to do better, so you need to take the time to recognize a person’s performance.

How: State what the person has achieved in terms of the overall team performance. In your planning for the discussion, you might also have discovered specific achievements or activities the person employed to reach the target.
This is the individual’s chance to identify roadblocks.

Why: There are several solid reasons why we get the person’s perspective on roadblocks or issues. If current performance is on track, it is critical to ask the individual to forecast ahead for potential issues that you both can address now. No manager likes surprises. Getting the individual to do this also encourages them to take more responsibility for their job.

Secondly, if performance is below expectations, you, as manager, don’t want to jump in too early. It’s possible that you don’t have all the facts. There might be circumstances that have a bearing on the situation that you simply didn’t know about.

How: If performance is on track, ask the person if he/she anticipates any issues or roadblocks ahead for the next quarter. If they do, continue with open-ended questions to see what the individual would do about the issue, and offer your assistance where appropriate.

If performance is below expectations, the person should have analyzed the situation, identified the key issues or problems, and come up with some alternative solutions prior to your meeting. In that case, coach the individual through the most appropriate action(s).

If performance is below expectations and the person has identified a roadblock but has done no analysis or has no solutions, coach the individual through the process of looking at the performance gap and coming up with ideas.

Roadblock: Getting caught up in defensive excuses

If the individual is performing below expectations and there is no legitimate reason outside of his/her control, avoid getting caught up in a possible melodrama where they give you a laundry list of defensive excuses rather than dealing with how to solve the problem. A simple technique is to stay calm and say “I understand. Now let’s get back to resolving the problem of your performance on this particular goal.”

You can repeat this phrase whenever an individual gives you an unacceptable excuse. Eventually (in most circumstances), the individual will run out of excuses and will have to refocus their attention on solving the problem.

Remember to be fair, however, and discriminate between “excuses” and “reasons.” Reasons are not made-up “defenses.” They are explanations of the facts that need to be considered in order to reach a satisfactory solution. Reasons should be listened to and acknowledged. If necessary, make adjustments.
Reinforce the importance of closing any performance gap.

**Why:** By highlighting the difference between what the person is presently doing and what they are supposed to be doing, you quickly define why you see the performance gap as a problem. The discussion will be easier for both of you to conduct if you approach it from a problem-solving perspective.

**How:** Review in detail the performance expectations you both agreed to. Highlight the discrepancies between those agreed-upon expectations and the performance or behavior at hand.

This also applies to any competencies you identified and selected. If the individual and their manager choose to use the Janus online 180-degree questionnaire, for example, the graphs in the output report will directly indicate any gaps between the levels of performance or expertise that were expected and what is being perceived at the present time. Individuals should decide for themselves whether to share this data with their manager at this progress update discussion stage. If they do, a highly detailed and constructive conversation can take place about very quantifiable gaps and what should be done about them.
KEY ACTION 3
Give feedback on the individual's views and describe actions/behaviors you believe have helped or contributed to the situation.

- Describe your reactions.
- Give the individual an opportunity to respond.

Why: Describing specific observations helps the other person understand exactly what you mean and then accept it as “real” or valid. There are two separate but equally critical methods involved here: being specific, and focusing on direct observations rather than on opinions or rumors.

Very general feedback can be more confusing than helpful. By being specific, you help the other person identify exactly what your points are. Additionally, it’s important to separate what you have actually observed from opinions or what others have told you about. Opinions tend to turn people off or make them defensive; rumors and hearsay can simply be inaccurate. Starting with facts gives you a common ground on which to build.

Specific feedback raises self-esteem by demonstrating your interest in the individual’s performance. Equally important, when performance is below expectations, specific feedback cannot be ignored.

How: To be specific when giving feedback, don’t talk vaguely about the way someone “usually” or “always” does things. Have a certain event or action in mind, and be able to say when and where it happened, who was involved, and what the results were. Stick to what you personally observed, and don’t try to speak for others.

Particularly with corrective feedback, it is important to be as specific as possible.

Being specific is especially important when you need to give an individual corrective or negative feedback about their behavior when they interact with others. In these situations, where the “facts” are less tangible, it’s important that you stick to what you have directly observed.

Pitfall: Too much at once

When giving negative feedback, avoid presenting a laundry list of negatives. Deal with one problem at a time. More than one at a time can become overwhelming, seem like “dumping,” and have a demotivating effect.

Describe your observations as a manager.

Why: Your reactions to what you have observed can provide very useful information to the other person. Submersed in their own perspective and thought processes, most people can benefit from seeing themselves from another’s perspective. When you describe your reactions or the consequences of the observed behaviors, the other person can better appreciate the impact their actions are having on others and on the organization or team as a whole.

How: After you have described your observations specifically and accurately, offer your reactions. Explain the consequences of the other person’s behavior and how you feel about it. Give examples of how you and others are affected.
Give the individual an opportunity to respond.

**Why:** Allow the appraisee the chance to react to your feedback; it builds their self-esteem and shows that you recognize the value of their ideas or suggestions. Get the other person's point of view—or make an overture for one. This also creates an opportunity to check for any misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Of course, this needs to be done with extreme care and in a genuine and open way, so you don't create the impression that the opportunity to offer to comment is “cosmetic” or “staged” in some way. This is a time for good focus, effective listening skills, and high concentration.

When a manager provides an opportunity for responses and reactions, he or she inevitably learns valuable tips on how things are going, gains a broader perspective, and fosters open communication.

**How:** Most people will take up the conversation when you leave off. However, if they hesitate, you have a couple of options for creating opportunities for response. One is to simply remain silent and make eye contact, indicating that you are waiting for a reply. Another is to ask an open-ended question. In either case, keep the discussions calm, be patient, and let the appraisee think about what they might like to say.
KEY ACTION 4

Ask the individual for their focus activities and milestones for the next three months. Give feedback on the individual’s ideas and add your own.

- If you are going to adjust the performance expectations, do so.
- Agree on the next steps to be taken by both of you for this goal or accountability.

Why: By giving the person you are appraising the responsibility of finding solutions before you jump in with your own ideas, you communicate that you respect their ability to solve problems and generate ideas. You are also telling them that you expect them to figure out concrete ways to work better. Often, the best ideas are generated by those closer to the work than you are.

In addition, you avoid being put in the position of imposing your own perspective on the individual all the time. You don’t want the individual to resist your suggestions or solutions because you are prompting them with the specifics of the situation.

Clearly, the individual’s ideas are valuable, whether they are on target or not. They deserve an honest reaction from you. As a coach, you use your feedback skills to teach, train, guide, encourage, or refocus. It’s important to encourage and reinforce the individual’s workable ideas, as well as to guide the person back on the right track if their ideas are not sound or if they need some adjustment in order to be workable.

Adding your own ideas is helpful to the individual because it can give them other options to follow in their plan for enhancing their performance. It also gives them insight into your broader management and organizational perspective; the next time, they will see their performance in a different light.

How: Review the ideas the individual talked about. Use your feedback skills to tell them how you think their ideas will affect their own performance, and the performance of the rest of the group. If necessary, show them how they might need to alter their ideas. Bring in other ideas or perspectives you feel will be important in reaching the desired objective.

The manager can also usefully suggest resources that are available to the individual, such as tools, money, staff, information, and knowledge of people inside and outside your work area. Determine when decisions can be made by the individual without your assistance, and when the person must check with you first.

Always try to reinforce positive aspects of the individual’s own ideas or performance before you offer any of your own constructive ideas.

In addition to coaching on hard, concrete performance issues, you might also need to discuss “softer” issues of interpersonal style. It is valuable to give input about style, as long as you do it in a way that follows this basic principle: “Always maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others.”
Adjust performance expectations.
This is always a difficult area, because full-year targets and expectations still need to be met. Some goals and/or accountabilities lend themselves to adjustment more readily than others, such as those that are more project-based. A project that has fallen behind can still be finished before year-end with some extra focus, but catching up on sales revenue or production costs once they have fallen behind is very difficult.

If you have an individual who has fallen behind on a goal or accountability and you are considering adjusting the target, there are three things to keep in mind:

1. Consider the overall performance of the individual. Is this the only goal or accountability that the person is falling behind on, or are there broader performance issues for you to deal with?
2. As a manager, you must still deliver the team result. Will transferring additional responsibility to other members of the team help your result?
3. Following this, how will you manage telling one or more members of the team that they will have to achieve more to compensate for a fellow colleague?

Agree on the next steps to be taken by both of you for this goal or accountability.
Why: It is important that you clarify the commitments each of you have made for this accountability. This will make the overall summary at the end simpler to prepare.

How: Determine what steps need to be taken and in what order. Develop reasonable time frames. Identify special strategies or approaches that will help prevent the pitfalls you discussed earlier.
KEY ACTION 5
Summarize the actions to be taken, and set a day and time for the next Update.

Why: Summarizing and setting a follow-up date is the best way to help the appraisee get started. This reaffirms what the individual has committed to do, and establishes the pace for putting their plan into action. Both tactics make it clear that a Performance Update session is not just “going through the motions.” It shows that you both agree on action and feel jointly accountable for results.

How: Review key agreements by summarizing the conversation, and set a day and time for the next Performance Update.

KEY ACTION 6
Express confidence and offer support.

Why: At the close of a Performance Update discussion, remember that your overall purpose is to engage the appraisee in a process of striving toward optimal performance that will benefit the organization as well as themselves. By closing on a positive note of support, you help motivate individuals to succeed at this. Your confidence in them builds confidence in themselves. People who receive consistent support from their managers typically respond more positively to development feedback, and make steady progress.

How: Describe why you believe the individual will be able to achieve the goals you identified during your discussion. Indicate how you can provide any assistance they might need in achieving those goals. Follow up by being available to assist in any reasonable way you can.

As we mentioned earlier, these six key action steps are a good way to help your progress-update discussions flow more smoothly and help you adequately cover all the subjects that should be at least touched on. Clearly, this process can be modified, added to, or changed if individuals and their managers feel that this is likely to create an even better result.
6.9 Participating in a Performance Update Discussion: 
The Employee’s Role

The Performance Update discussion will be successful if the individual being appraised or the 
reviewee is fully involved and engaged in a two-way discussion.

To achieve this, the appraisee needs to prepare for this session. They must:

- Review their performance against agreed-on objectives and goals.
- Complete a Performance Update form, or make notes prior to the meeting.
- Produce the necessary data on which their performance will be reviewed (and make 
  any adjustments).

As we suggested earlier, the individual can prepare by using mind maps, rough notes, or some 
other method or technique. However, whatever method is chosen, they have to give themselves 
plenty of time to prepare, and not leave everything to the last minute.

ASSISTANCE FOR THE APPRAISEE

Many organizations approach the performance appraisal without providing sufficient help for 
employees on how they should cope with the overall system and, in particular, with the Perform-
ance Update meeting.

In order to make sure that this meeting is smooth for both parties, preparation is vital.

The appraisee will find this Janus support manual to be a valuable resource. It can help 
individuals prepare for their Performance Update meeting. They should:

- Review the performance appraisal system’s objectives, principal elements, and values 
  (see Module 1).
- Assess their overall level of self-awareness and openness to constructive criticism.
- Engage in any feedback data-collection that they think will be useful (via the on-line 
  questionnaire process).
- Prepare and be specific about what helped or hindered their efforts to achieve their 
  goals.
- Prepare and offer solutions regarding future learning and development needs.
KEY ACTIONS
The following Key Actions have been developed as a guide for the individual appraisee.

The five key points, similar to the key points developed for managers, are an easy way to prepare for the Update discussion. The appraisee should read through the Manager’s Key Actions outlined in detail earlier in this module so they fully understand what the manager will be looking for.

The five Key Actions for the individual appraisee are:

1. Develop a clear understanding of the purpose and importance of the discussion. Listen carefully to the manager’s explanation of the process.

2. The individual will be asked to provide an update of: their progress toward their first goal or accountability; how they are doing against the quarterly activities and targets; and how they might enhance their performance.

3. Listen carefully to the feedback from the manager, which will include details on actions or behaviors that he/she believes have contributed to the current situation, and things the appraisee should improve in the next quarter.

4. Outline the focus activities and milestones for the next three months. The appraisee should listen carefully to the manager’s suggestions.

   (For each goal or accountability repeat Key Actions 2, 3, and 4 until all accountabilities have been reviewed. Then move to Key Action 5.)

5. The manager will summarize the next actions to be taken and then set a day and time for the next Performance Update.

On the next page is a sample periodic progress review form. This can be used by the manager and/or the employee to help to provide structure to the discussions.
PERIODIC PERFORMANCE UPDATE: FORM

1. RESULTS

(The employee and the manager should each assess current progress in achieving agreed-on objectives or results).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANAGER</th>
<th>EMPLOYEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Objective/accountability</td>
<td>__________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>__________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Objective/accountability</td>
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<td>__________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Objective/accountability</td>
<td>__________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Performance assessments should be expressed as **Exceeding Expectations (EE)**, **Meeting Expectations (ME)**, or **Below Expectations (BE)**.

2. COMPETENCIES

Both the employee and the manager should evaluate the extent to which this individual demonstrated competencies and/or management practices in achieving results. Use the following rating scale:

1. Outstanding
2. Demonstrated competence
3. Needs attention—development opportunity
   * Not applicable to this position
   ? Insufficient evidence to determine a rating

(continued)
PERIODIC PERFORMANCE UPDATE: FORM (continued)

MANAGER    EMPLOYEE

Competencies:
1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________
6. ____________________________________________
7. ____________________________________________
8. ____________________________________________
9. ____________________________________________
10. ____________________________________________

3. DEVELOPMENT ON THE JOB

Both the appraisee and the manager should provide an assessment of the progress that is being made by the individual in meeting his/her personal developmental objectives. This assessment should be expressed as being On Target (OT) or Below Target (BT).

MANAGER    EMPLOYEE

1. Developmental objective
2. Developmental objective

4. COMMENT (OPTIONAL)

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

(continued)
5. NEXT STEPS

Use this part of the form to describe how you are doing now and the adjustments in the near term you intend to make.

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Ask yourself the following planning questions before you attend your Performance Update session:

1. Did I do everything I could to make sure my objectives were met?
2. Did I demonstrate initiative and proactivity in my approach to goal achievement?
3. Am I accepting responsibility, or am I blaming others or events?
4. Did I blame myself or take responsibility, and make plans for recovery?
5. Did I focus on problems, or on solutions?
6. Did I mistakenly expect others to have done some tasks or actions that I should have done myself?
7. What else could I have done? What could I do differently?
8. What have I learned?
6.10 Summary

The Performance Update is the key vehicle for making sure that every individual is given a formal opportunity to discuss their ongoing performance and to get back on track if they have lost their way.

Coaching has to be an ongoing effort on the manager’s part throughout these progress update discussions, so they can help individuals reach their full potential. This can mean helping a poor performer improve, helping a good performer be even better, or helping others acquire skills that will give them increased opportunities.

No manager who is truthful will say that coaching employees is an easy job. It takes considerable time to prepare, and demands a certain ability to offer real and tangible assistance to an individual who has little idea of what to do next. In addition, all the conflicting demands on a manager’s time tend to come before coaching. However, the most effective supervisors and managers believe that developing their people is a key leadership responsibility; the best leaders view coaching as a central measure of their own performance. The regular progress review discussion is an ideal opportunity for both parties to work closely and collaboratively to achieve the best results for all concerned.
Taking corrective action does not mean punishing an employee. The purpose of taking corrective action is to get the individual back on track and to improve, not to make them feel bad or punish them. Taking corrective action is therefore an integral part of the ongoing Performance Management process. The best supervisors take the action with the genuine hope and intention that most people will get quickly back on track, and even become “high performing” again.
Module Seven
Handling Unacceptable Performance

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Module Seven
Handling Unacceptable Performance

7.1 Introduction
An individual’s performance will sometimes start to fall short of expectations, fall below the expected standards, or in general become unacceptable in some way. Perhaps an individual will even break a rule or a policy, or miss important targets, or continually perform unacceptably.

It is imperative that you address the unacceptable performance immediately or as soon as it becomes apparent, so that it doesn’t deteriorate or become considerably worse or the opportunity to address the issue disappears, leaving you with only a few “blunt” remedies (discipline, transfer, or termination). Refer to Module 5 on Coaching for more information on how to do this.

Module 5 provided general guidance on how to handle unacceptable performance as positively and constructively as possible, short of formal discipline. This next module provides not only more detail, but gives specific guidance as to what steps need to be taken when the performance shortfall has become significantly more serious.

Taking corrective action will probably be necessary from time to time or will have to be discussed during the Update or Annual Performance Appraisal discussions. Janus provides a positive process for handling in the form of suggested planning questions and forms/checklists outlined at the end of this module.
7.2 Coaching for Unacceptable Performance

We suggested in the coaching module that in most situations, proficient managers improve and develop individual performance by setting clear expectations for team members, making sure that they have the resources to do their jobs, and providing ongoing feedback, coaching, and positive recognition via regular Performance Updates and day-to-day coaching.

However, even with sound leadership practices and an effective Performance Management System that is open and well-maintained, some people will continue to show unacceptable performance. In these circumstances, you must take corrective action. In addition, if an individual is clearly not meeting agreed-upon targets and goals (established in the Individual Performance Plan or objective-setting discussion) and is not responding to coaching via the Performance Update discussions, more serious intervention is clearly required.

You will also have to take corrective action if an individual engages in behavior that directly interferes with the performance of others. Tardiness, abusive language, or harassment of other staff are examples of “unacceptable” behavior, particularly when they interfere with the team’s work or they are violations of rules of conduct or standards for acceptable organizational behavior.

In all cases, your first response as a supervisor or manager is to work directly with the employee—to coach them toward improved performance. The Performance Update is the perfect vehicle to do that.

Module 4 (Giving and Receiving Feedback) and Module 5 (Coaching) of this Janus Performance Management documentation system contain a considerable amount of process and content information to help supervisors and managers make early interventions in order to get performance back on track. We also looked at ways in which an individual can respond positively and constructively to feedback (rather than see it as harmful criticism) to work at it as a chance to re-focus, learn, and grow as a person. However, if despite everyone’s best efforts the unacceptable performance continues, a manager will probably need to take ongoing and systematic corrective action. It is imperative that managers let individuals know when their performance is seriously off-course, and help them develop a high-priority plan to get promptly back on track. This takes a special effort and a structured plan. Our task here is to outline such a plan or path in the subsequent pages.
MANAGERIAL COURAGE TO TAKE FIRM ACTION

Taking corrective action on poor performance is a critical leadership function, yet managers are often reluctant to take it on. Managers often postpone taking corrective action because they want to avoid having unpleasant discussions with their people, or they don’t want to risk getting employees upset. Sometimes they just wait and hope the problem will work itself out.

Postponing corrective action usually hurts the team, the manager, and the organization. The longer an employee is allowed to perform at unacceptable levels, the harder it can be for them to correct that performance. An individual on the team who performs unacceptably damages their relationships with others and loses credibility. That credibility can be very difficult to regain if the problem continues for long.

Your credibility as a leader can also suffer, and you will eventually lose the respect of your team if you avoid your responsibility to take corrective action. Unchecked poor performance and unmonitored problem behaviors erode the standards you have established by confusing and frustrating those employees who are meeting those standards.

Unacceptable performance obviously affects every organization’s bottom line, as well. Poor results, poor quality work, or the tensions created by problem behavior sooner or later translate into weaker team results.

Taking corrective action does not mean punishing an employee. The purpose of taking corrective action is to get the individual back on track and to improve, not to make them feel bad or to punish them. Taking corrective action is therefore an integral part of the ongoing Performance Management process, done with the genuine hope and intention that people will get quickly back on track and even become high performing again.

Most corrective action can lead to positive turnaround results, but if substandard performance continues without acceptable improvement, corrective action discussions and Performance Update discussions effectively become the disciplinary process. Disciplinary action is generally progressive: it is a process that gives individuals every chance to address their performance issues and achieve the best outcome for everyone involved. In the end, the supervisor or manager needs to be resolute and firm, and demonstrate the courage to follow through. No one gains from weak leadership in these situations.
What you need to do to have a successful discussion about corrective action:

Every discussion on corrective action will be unique and will have to be based on “contextual” factors. We recommend the basic four-step process outlined in brief below, which will be explained in more detail later.

1. You need to schedule a discussion on corrective action when you notice any of the following cues:
   - An individual has not met one or more performance goals or accountabilities or the person has not responded to coaching and is still performing below agreed-on levels.
   - You receive a serious and justifiable complaint about an individual’s performance or behavior.
   - An individual has violated the organization’s rules of conduct, and disciplinary action is required.
   - An individual’s behavior is so seriously off-track that it must stop immediately.
   - An individual is behaving in a way that is detrimental to their performance or credibility.

2. While they might be expecting this discussion, most people will generally not be prepared, as would be the case for the Forward Performance Plan discussion at the beginning of the appraisal cycle and the Performance Update discussion. As a supervisor or manager, you need to prepare very carefully for this discussion, and be ready to take the lead.

3. Use the Planning Questions in this module to prepare for your discussion.

4. At the completion of your meeting, write up what was agreed to and give the individual a copy.

None of the above steps should be regarded as fixed or rigid. However, whether you choose to modify them or not, they do reflect a simple sequential path that can help participants and managers through the process.
How you need to plan a successful discussion concerning corrective action:

Obviously, any kind of formal corrective action will be sensitive. It is likely that the concerned individual will feel threatened rather than open about having the discussion. However, if you handle it correctly, the person will often react positively to your trying to help.

The discussion on corrective action is clearly more serious than most “normal” feedback or coaching conversations. This is not the time to simply have a quiet word or informal chat at some unspecified time when you can get around to it. A formal meeting should be scheduled and everyone involved should know that a structured review is going to take place, with agreements documented and followed up on to see whether tangible improvement has occurred.

Follow the guidelines suggested below (elaborated on later in this section) to get the best results.

- Schedule your discussion somewhere quiet, and never on a Friday afternoon or just before an individual plans to go home.
- Make sure your preparation is complete, focused, and specific.
- There is no specific form to use for this discussion, but you should use the Planning Questions and review the Key Actions ahead of time.
- The process should be documented.

The Key Actions described in this section are designed to increase your effectiveness when you lead a corrective action discussion. However, managers might have questions on the process or what is expected of them. In such cases, it is important to contact someone who is more knowledgeable or who has had experience handling similar situations and can provide useful input or advice to ensure that the process runs as smoothly as possible.
Conducting a Discussion about Corrective Action

The Key Actions that are subsequently described in detail aim provide a logical sequence for you to follow when working to help correct poor performance or unacceptable behavior. In the event that subsequent formal disciplinary action is needed, the same Key Actions can be applied to the progressive process as it unfolds.

KEY ACTIONS
1. Point out the difference between present performance and agreed-upon expectations.
2. Describe specifically the negative impact of the individual’s performance.
3. Get the individual’s view of the situation.
4. Ask for ideas on how the individual believes that they can correct the situation, and add your own.
5. Explain any steps you plan to take, and why you believe they are needed.
6. Agree on an action plan and set a date for follow-up.
7. Express confidence that the individual can correct the situation.

Each of the above action steps is explained in more detail on the next page. Managers in particular should be encouraged to read these action steps carefully, so they understand the entire process in preparation for future discussions.

KEY ACTION 1
Point out the difference between present performance and agreed-upon expectations.

Why: By highlighting the difference between what the individual is presently doing and what they are supposed to be doing, you quickly define why you see their performance as a problem. The discussion will be easier for both of you to conduct if you approach it from a problem-solving viewpoint. Then you can define the problem clearly and, at the same time, preserve the basic principle: Focus on the situation, issue, or behavior—not on the person.

How: Review in detail the performance expectations you and the person concerned agreed to. Highlight the discrepancies between those agreed-upon expectations and the performance or behavior at hand.

KEY ACTION 2
Describe specifically the negative impact of the individual’s performance.

Why: This Key Action draws the individual’s attention to the effect their performance or behavior is having on reaching goals or on the performance of others. It can help them to see consequences of their behavior that they were not previously aware of. This will help them understand for themselves the need to correct the situation.

How: Describe as objectively, clearly, and concretely as you can what the negative results of their performance or behavior are for the individual, for co-workers (if appropriate), and for the organization. Focus on behaviors or situations, not on personalities.
KEY ACTION 3
Get the individual’s view of the situation.

Why: There are several solid reasons why it’s good to get the individual’s perspective. For example, it’s possible that you don’t have all the facts, and that there are circumstances that have a bearing on the situation that you simply didn’t know about. In addition, this Key Action allows you to see whether or not the individual actually acknowledges that the problem exists. That acknowledgement is a critical first step in potentially solving the problem.

How: Use open-ended questions that encourage the individual to tell you how they see the situation. You are not yet asking for solutions. You need to get a mutual understanding of the problem first. Precede your question with a statement showing that you want to be fair.

Pitfall: Getting caught up in defensive excuses

Avoid getting caught up in a melodrama in which an individual gives you a laundry list of defensive excuses rather than deal with how to solve the problem. A simple technique is to stay calm and say, “I understand. Now, let’s get back to resolving the problem of your performance.” You can firmly repeat this phrase whenever the concerned individual gives you an unacceptable excuse. Eventually, the individual will run out of excuses and will have to refocus their attention on solving the problem.

Always remember to be fair and to differentiate between “excuses” and “reasons.” Reasons are not made-up “defenses.” They are explanations of facts that need to be considered in order to reach a satisfactory solution. Reasons should be listened to and acknowledged.

KEY ACTION 4
Ask for ideas on how the individual can correct the situation, and add your own.

Why: When you ask for the concerned individual’s ideas, you place the responsibility for solving the problem squarely on their shoulders, where it belongs. For the solution to have the best chance of success, the individual needs to recognize the problem and commit to solving it. When a supervisor or manager arbitrarily imposes a solution from their position of authority, they seldom get the commitment needed from the individual.

However, it might be appropriate to add a specific action you want the person to take, but let them suggest ideas first in order to get as much commitment as possible and maintain the individual’s self-esteem.

How: Ask a direct open-ended question that clearly leads the concerned individual in the direction of developing an action plan. Keep the discussion focused on problems to be solved, rather than on “fixing” the individual.
KEY ACTION 5
Explain any steps you plan to take and why they are important.

**Why:** In many situations, the problem will be resolved by the individual following through with plans you both agree on. In these cases, an appropriate next step for you is to offer your support.

However, in situations that are serious or that require formal disciplinary action, you must inform the concerned individual of the actions that you plan to take, as well as any further action that could result if they do not correct the situation promptly.

**How:** Clearly state any actions you plan to take. Make sure your actions are appropriate and are consistent with your organization’s policy, and that they will help correct the situation. Make sure the individual understands your intentions.

*Pitfall: Failing to document evolving performance problems*

To be successful at progressive corrective action, you must be able to rely on facts and specifics. By documenting your discussions, you fortify your case for performance improvement. Without documentation, the impact of your corrective actions can be weakened or forgotten. Documented specifics get the person’s attention and eliminate the opportunity to plead ignorance or forgetfulness or to avoid the facts.

To ensure that you have the facts continually available on an evolving performance problem, put your specific observations of the individual’s performance in writing, along with any action taken or to be taken. Do not rely on memory—yours or theirs.

KEY ACTION 6
Agree on an action plan and set a date for the follow-up.

**Why:** It is important to confirm the individual’s commitment to correcting the situation and to clearly establish the specific steps to be taken. An action plan that you both agree on provides a good starting point and a step-by-step process for the person to follow. Setting an actual time and date to review progress emphasizes the time frame in which the problem performance must be corrected.

**How:** Review the ideas you’ve discussed, and get a verbal commitment for each action step. In the individual’s presence, write down the results expected at each step, and completion dates. Agree on a specific time when you will get together and evaluate results. The next Performance Update is an ideal time, but some actions will need formal follow-up within weeks.

*Pitfall: Getting thrown off balance by an individual’s hostile reaction*

In taking disciplinary action, be prepared for hostile reaction from the concerned individual. Being well-prepared with specifics and staying calm are effective ways of proving to a hostile individual that you’re not engaged in a personal battle. Instead, you are demonstrating that you view the performance or the behavior problem as something quite serious, and that change is imperative.
KEY ACTION 7

Express confidence that the individual can correct the situation.

Why: It’s difficult for most people to hear that their performance is unacceptable. Your encouragement can help restore a drop in an individual’s self-esteem resulting from their poor performance. Without some degree of personal self-esteem, it is very difficult for most people to work successfully to change their behavior.

How: Positively reinforce the concerned person’s action plan. Let them know when you have confidence in them. When possible, refer to some previous accomplishment or success they have had at solving performance problems.

DOCUMENTING THE WHOLE PROCESS

Documenting the process is critical in determining the effectiveness of any corrective action you might consider taking. It enables you to define and record what the performance discrepancy really is and why it might be occurring, before you engage in any verbal communication.

Timing is also important. Jumping in too soon can be detrimental to your success. First, be sure the concerned person is working with a clear understanding of what the performance expectations are for the job and the competencies that are expected to be performed to a minimal standard. Then, be sure you have done all that you can to address the unacceptable performance openly and to coach the individual up to a level of acceptable performance.

Begin taking progressive corrective action only when the problem persists. To help guide your approach to taking corrective action, answer the following questions before you meet with the person concerned.

1. What is the difference between present performance and agreed-upon expectations? Go back to previous discussions (including Performance Update discussions) you have had with the individual and recall specific performance criteria and guidelines you both agreed to. Compare those to the performance that is now causing you concern.

2. What is the negative impact of the individual’s present performance? Does the negative impact really warrant corrective action? Ask the “what if” question: “What if everyone did it?”

3. Are there factors outside the individual’s control that might be contributing to the person’s performance problem? People do not work in a vacuum. Besides their own behaviors, their performance depends on factors such as your managerial style, the organization’s policies and procedures they have to abide by, the resources they have to work with, and the cooperation they receive from others. To get to the root of a performance problem, you need to consider such other contributing factors.

Always remember that everything you do should be documented at every stage. Documentation is especially critical if the individual does not correct the problem and their employment must eventually be terminated.
**PLANNING QUESTIONS**

**Instructions:** Before using the Key Actions for Taking Corrective Action in practice sessions and on the job, plan by answering the following questions:

Individual’s name: ____________________________________________________________

Manager’s name: ____________________________________________________________

What is the difference between present performance and agreed-upon expectations?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

What is the negative impact of the individual’s present performance? Does the negative impact really warrant corrective actions?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Are there factors outside the individual’s control that could be contributing to the employee’s performance problem?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

(continued)
PLANNING QUESTIONS (concluded)

Your Personal Roadblocks or Pitfalls
From your experience, what potential roadblocks or pitfalls will you need to overcome or anticipate in order to achieve success through corrective action?

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

How will you overcome or address these roadblocks or pitfalls?

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________
### OBSERVATION FORM

**Instruction to the observer:** While you observe others taking action, use this Observation Form to make careful notes of specific things the individual did well and to record suggestions for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Actions</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Point out the difference between present performance and agreed-upon expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Describe specifically the negative impact of the individual's performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Get the person's view of the situation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ask for ideas on how the individual can correct the situation, and add your own.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explain any steps you plan to take and why.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Agree on an action plan and a date for follow up.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Express confidence that the individual can correct the situation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### OBSERVATION FORM

**Instruction to the observer:** While you observe others taking corrective action, use this Observation Form to make careful notes of specific things the individual did well and to record suggestions for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Principles</th>
<th>Specific Behaviors and Phrases</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Focus on the situation, issue, or behavior—not on the person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Maintain constructive relationships with peers and the manager.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Take the initiative to make things better.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lead by example.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3 Dealing with Unacceptable Performance through Formal Discipline

All the options described in the previous pages should be extensively explored with the employee prior to taking the last resort—dealing with unacceptable performance through some means of formal discipline outlined below. However, sometimes discussion, new target-setting, and gentle persuasion will not work, and it will be necessary to resort to a more structured, formal, written approach.

When deciding whether any kind of formal disciplinary penalty is appropriate and what form it should take, be sure you consider these things:

- the penalty for a particular misconduct that is outlined in the organization’s disciplinary procedure
- the penalty imposed in similar cases in the past
- any special circumstances that might make it appropriate to lessen the severity of the penalty
- the concerned individual’s past disciplinary record, general record, age, position, and length of service
- whether the proposed penalty is fair and reasonable, in view of all the circumstances.

It should be clear what the normal organizational practice is for dealing with the kind of poor performance under consideration. This does not mean that similar problems or shortfalls will always call for similar disciplinary action; each case must be looked at on its merits, and any relevant circumstances must be taken into account. These include health or domestic problems, provocation, ignorance of the rules or standards involved, or inconsistent treatment in the past.

The formal disciplinary path will twist and turn according to the size and type of the enterprise and the sector or industry in which it operates. The last part of this module offers advice on how to properly handle continued poor performance through more-formal disciplinary means. Although this is a serious step for all concerned (like other parts of the performance management process), it obviously must be handled with as much care, diligence, and professionalism as possible. A discipline and termination checklist is included at the end of this module. A quick checklist for handling the entire disciplinary performance management situation appears on the next page.
CHECKLIST FOR HANDLING A DISCIPLINARY SITUATION

This checklist sets out the key steps that any organization should consider when handling a disciplinary performance matter. All organizations, regardless of size, should observe the principles of fairness outlined below.

1. Gather all relevant facts.
   - Do this promptly, before memories fade.
   - Take statements, collect documents.
   - In serious cases, consider suspension with pay while an investigation is conducted.

2. Be clear about the performance shortfall.
   - Is action needed at this stage?

3. If so, decide whether the action should be:
   - advice and counseling
   - formal disciplinary action.

4. If formal action is required, arrange a disciplinary interview.
   - Make sure that the individual is aware of the nature of the shortfall, and that the interview is a disciplinary one.
   - Tell the individual where and when the interview will take place, and that they have the right to bring someone.
   - Try to arrange for a second member of management to be present.

5. Start by introducing:
   - those present and the purpose of the interview
   - the nature of the shortfall
   - the supporting evidence.

6. Allow the individual to state his/her case.
   - Consider and question any explanations put forward.

7. If any new facts emerge:
   - Decide whether further investigation is required.
   - If it is, adjourn the interview and reconvene when the investigation is completed.

8. Except in very straightforward cases, call an adjournment before reaching a decision.
   - Get a clear picture of the facts.
   - If they are disputed, decide on the balance of probability: What version of the facts is true?

9. Before deciding the penalty, consider:
   - the gravity of the offense and whether the policies or regulations provide guidance
   - the penalty applied in similar cases in the past
   - the individual’s disciplinary record and general service
   - any mitigating circumstances
   - whether the proposed penalty is reasonable in all the circumstances

10. Reconvene the disciplinary interview to:
    - Clearly inform the individual of the decision and the penalty, if any.
    - Explain the right of appeal and how it operates.
    - In the case of a warning, explain what improvement is expected, how long the warning will last, and what the consequences of failure to improve are.

11. Record the action taken.
    - If other than an oral warning, confirm the disciplinary action to the individual in writing.
    - Keep a simple record of the action taken for future reference.

12. Monitor the individual’s performance.
    - Disciplinary action should be followed up to encourage improvement.
    - Monitor progress regularly, and discuss it with the individual.
7.4 The Discipline Counseling Process

As we have already suggested, counseling at the right time and in the right way might be all that is needed, and in fact will often be a more satisfactory method of dealing with a performance problem than a formal disciplinary interview in which written warnings are immediately given.

HOW SHOULD “DISCIPLINE COUNSELING” BE DONE?

- Wherever possible, hold the discussion where you cannot be overheard by other employees. It should be a two-way discussion, focused on pointing out any shortcomings in performance and encouraging improvement. Criticism should be constructive, and the emphasis should be on finding ways in which the individual can remedy any shortcomings.

- Listen to any explanation put forward by the individual. If it becomes clear that there is no case, this should be made clear to the individual.

- Where an improvement is required, make sure that the individual understands what needs to be done and how performance or conduct will be reviewed, and over what period. The person should be told that if there is no improvement, the next stage will be to go through the formal disciplinary process.

- Take care that a counseling interview does not turn into a formal disciplinary hearing; this might unintentionally result in violating employee rights, such as the right to be accompanied by someone. If during the meeting it becomes obvious that the matter is more serious, adjourn the discussion. Make it clear that the matter will be pursued under the formal disciplinary procedure.

- Keep a brief note of any counseling, for reference purposes. This should not be confused with action taken under the formal disciplinary procedure (in which written warnings are given).

You can manage the “unacceptable performance” process once all other constructive and non-disciplinary means of assistance have been exhausted with three distinct steps (check this out; the legislation might have been changed). The individual employee should at all times understand which step they are in and what the consequences are for continued unacceptable performance.

The three steps are:

- First warning (can be verbal)
- Second (and final) warning
- Dismissal

If clearly described unacceptable performance continues after you have given a verbal warning and a written warning, there is clear cause and documentary proof to dismiss the employee. This is obviously a dramatic step, but if the individual has not responded to the fair and reasonable application of this simple process, this is a reasonable outcome for the organization as a whole.

Important: This three-step procedure should not be spread out over many weeks or many months. This will demotivate the individual, their supervisor, and immediate team members. Unacceptable performance should be quickly recognized; the warning steps should be used to help people either get back on track or face the consequences of termination in a clearly specified time frame.
7.5 Delivering the First and Second Warnings

The first step of the disciplinary process involves a warning. Often this is done verbally, but it can be in writing. Where possible, get the individual to sign a notice of the first warning. This is confirmation that the individual accepts that a clear warning has been given (not necessarily that they agree with it). In practical terms, the individual can refuse to sign any such letter, but it is good to at least give them the opportunity to do so. A copy of the notice (whether signed or not) is generally placed in the individual’s file, and they are given a copy.

If the individual does not improve their performance after the first warning, it is time for the second warning. The person is warned and a discipline notice is again reviewed and signed by the person concerned. A copy of the second notice is usually placed in the individual’s file; the individual is also given a copy.

A “Discipline and Termination Checklist” to help deal with this process is provided at the end of this module. A sample disciplinary interview form is also provided.

PREPARING FOR THE DISCUSSION

The most important thing a manager can do at this point is to prepare. The manager needs to make sure that he/she has all the information that they require at hand, and that they are confident that they can explain why performance standards are below expectations and know exactly what to say (and in what sequence).

Preparation also consists of making sure that a private location has been selected, where the conversation cannot be overheard and where there will not be interruptions. There should be space for both the manager and the individual to sit down (usually with the manager at a desk, with their paperwork easily accessible in front of them). There should also be room for witnesses.

Individuals should always be given the opportunity to bring along a witness if he/she wants to do so. If this option is taken, the role of the witness is to observe proceedings and comment (if they are asked to do so by the person concerned). However, the manager should always direct their comments to the individual, and should not engage in any subjective discussion with either the witness or the person.

If the individual does not take up the option to have a witness present, the manager should ideally conduct the interview with a nominated witness of their own. This helps prevent any disagreement about what was said.
CONDUCTING A “WARNING” DISCUSSION
The manager should deliver a first and second warning as soon as the unacceptable performance is identified and confirmed. The warning should be delivered in private, with a witness present. Conduct the discussion by following these steps:

1. Advise the witness that they can only observe.
2. Advise the individual that the purpose of the meeting is to deliver a formal warning. Also advise him/her that notes will be taken during the meeting, and that a copy will be put in any file that is normally kept.
3. Confirm the individual’s overall value to the organization. State that the objective of the discussion is to help the individual focus on specific ways to improve performance.
4. State the observations that relate directly to the behavior or actions—those that have prompted the warning. Stick as much as possible to the facts and firm evidence, not unconfirmed opinions and assumptions.
5. Clearly tell the person concerned what the expected performance is and when the individual must meet the standards that have been set.
6. State in specific terms what the individual must do to improve and over what time period, and state the particular consequence if improvement is not forthcoming.
7. Ask the person concerned for comments. Discuss them only if the comments are directly relevant to the individual’s ability to improve.
8. Summarize the discussion, restating the actions required for improvement and the time frame that has been discussed.
9. Complete any notes in the form of a “Warning Notice” and have the individual and witness sign the notice, if possible.
10. Give a copy to the person, and place a copy in the relevant file.
11. Schedule a date to meet again to measure progress toward the improvement targets.
12. Restate the individual’s value to the organization, and encourage ongoing two-way communication so they can stay on track.
DOCUMENTING DISCIPLINARY SESSIONS

There are many reasons why every disciplinary discussion should be documented and why the manager and the individual concerned should sign a written summary of the session wherever this is possible. This will be important should the individual attempt to contest any dismissal. A copy of the signed documentation should be given to the individual, and a copy should be placed in any personnel file that is kept.

By signing, the manager and the individual concerned are agreeing that the conversation took place. If the person refuses to sign the form, the manager must ask the individual to write comments on the back of the form, and then SIGN them. If the individual still refuses to sign, the manager should write “Individual refused to sign” on the form, and give the person a copy.

The documentation of any disciplinary discussion should include:

- The person’s name
- Names of any witnesses present
- The reason for the warning, including:
  - a description of the individual’s unacceptable performance
  - the date and time of the individual’s unacceptable performance
- Dates of any previous counseling or warnings
- The date of the disciplinary discussion
- A description of the corrective action to be taken
- The signature of the manager
- The signature of the individual concerned
- Copies for the personnel file and the individual concerned.

Copies of sample interview and written/formal warning forms are shown at the end of this module. Refer to the “Explanation of the Forms” section at the end of this module for further details.
7.6 Dismissing or Terminating Individuals

It is never a pleasant task to have to dismiss an employee, but it is sometimes necessary. If the disciplinary process has been followed, the dismissal should not come as a surprise, but rather be understood as the end result of continued non-performance or serious misconduct.

GENERAL LAWS AND POLICIES

Termination:
Approach this with extreme caution. An individual can take the organization to court or to a regulatory agency if he or she believes that their termination was harsh, opening up the possibility of damages and/or reinstatement.

Follow the basic rules outlined below to avoid problems with termination or if the termination might be appealed. Please be warned: if you must terminate an employee, GET PROFESSIONAL/LEGAL ADVICE first. This information is not meant to be anything but a brief guide, and can do no more than alert you to the pitfalls.

Legislation might not apply to non-employees (independent contractors) or anyone earning more than a certain amount per annum. It usually does not apply to casual workers, those working within a probationary period, or fixed-term employees, but be careful: it can apply to a “casual” or temporary worker if that person has been employed for more than a few months.

First, clarify why you wish to dismiss the individual. You need to do this because it is often illegal to terminate someone for any of the following reasons:

- Temporary absence from work because of illness or injury
- Union membership or union activity
- Non-membership in a union
- Having acted as a representative of employees or having sought such a position
- Filing a complaint against the employer
- Appearing as a witness in a case involving alleged employer violation of laws or regulations
- Anti-discrimination reasons: race, color, sex, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, ancestry, or social origin
- Absence from work (maternity leave or other parental leave)
- Absence from work while on jury duty.
Prior to dismissal:
If the individual is to be terminated for any reason, you should ask whether the following procedures have been followed:

- Has a reasonable investigation been conducted by the employer concerning allegations against the individual concerned?
- Has the individual been presented with the reason and any specific allegations made against them (preferably in writing)?
- Has the individual been interviewed within a reasonable length of time (24 hours) after having been given the reason? Has it been made clear to them in advance that:
  — termination is under consideration, and that the outcome of that meeting might be termination?
  — they should have a witness of their choosing present with them?
- At the interview, was the individual given full opportunity:
  — to reply to the accusations made?
  — to be heard as to whether there are any matters that the employer should be aware of when deciding whether to terminate the individual?
  — to be heard as to whether they should be dismissed if the employer finds the allegations against the individual to be true?
- Has the employer carefully considered all matters raised by the individual at the interview, prior to making a decision to dismiss the person concerned?
- Has the employer documented all discipline sessions and kept careful notes of each step in the process?
- Finally, has the employer made sure that the reason for termination is not harsh, unjust, or unreasonable?

It is not possible to describe all the circumstances that would make for harsh, unjust, or unreasonable termination. Some examples could be:

- a false accusation
- a minor transgression that did not warrant termination
- dismissing an individual for reasons relating to their performance, without first giving the person a reasonable opportunity to improve
- a lack of procedural fairness.

Remember, each case can be considered on its merits, and everything that happens can be used as evidence.

It is essential that you keep careful notes of every step. In all cases, get professional advice and use a relevant professional association that offers such guidance.
Conducting the discussion:
Any termination discussion should be relatively brief (5–10 minutes), and should focus only on the specific actions necessary for dismissing the individual concerned. The discussion should always be held in private. The manager should emphasize that the decision is final, and cannot be changed.

It is recommended that the manager conduct the dismissal discussion by performing the following steps:

- State the reason for the termination, and that the decision is final.
- Tell the individual what he or she is entitled to (paycheck, vacation pay, etc.), and when it can be received and/or claimed.
- Ask for any property belonging to the organization to be returned.
- Sign the appropriate forms.
- Conclude by wishing the individual well. It costs you nothing to be polite and courteous at all times.

Here is a list of things you must not do when conducting a dismissal meeting:

- Do not let the meeting go on longer than approximately 10 minutes.
- Do not give hope that the decision could be reversed.
- Do not discuss personality issues in any way.
- Do not discuss other employees.
- Do not stray from the central issue.
- Do not be overly sympathetic.
- Do not respond to threats.
- Do not document poor performance after termination.
7.7 Completing the Paperwork

After the employee has been terminated, it is obviously extremely important that the manager document the discussion, stating the reasons for the termination, their comments and observations, and any comments made by the individual concerned. Sample forms for documenting the discussion can be found on the next page and at the end of this module (“Record of Termination Interview” and “Letter of Termination”).

One of the key reasons why you must fully document every step in the disciplinary process is that a dismissed individual can and might appeal or dispute the decision. Whether this is an internal appeals procedure or an external and more formal legal challenge, a properly assembled “paper trail” is a more powerful defense than simply having one or more subjective witnesses offer verbal observations.
DOCUMENTATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL DISMISSAL DISCUSSION

Business Unit: ________________________________________________________________

Date:________________________________ Time:________________________________

Name of Individual:_____________________________________________________________

Manager: ____________________________________________________________________

Witness: _____________________________________________________________________

Contact Information:____________________________________________________

Reason for Termination:_________________________________________________________

Summary of the Discussion

What the Manager said:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

What the Individual said:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
7.8 Explanation of the Forms

DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION CHECKLIST
A summary of the procedures that must be followed at each stage of the Counseling and Termination process is necessary in order for you to be able to demonstrate that you have acted fairly and with due diligence in your treatment of an under-performing individual. If you are unsure about any aspect of the procedure, it is recommended that you seek advice/input from an appropriate industry group or association or similar external advisory organization.

RECORD OF INTERVIEW
A written record of the interview should always be completed when formally counseling an individual for performance or behavior problems. This form should indicate all relevant information pertaining to the problems that have led to the formal interview. In addition, this form should indicate an explanation of management’s decision to proceed with the formal warning and associated action. A copy of this form should be given to the individual concerned.

FIRST FORMAL WARNING
This form should be completed and issued to the individual within 24 hours of the formal counseling interview taking place. The reasons for the warning and the actions to be implemented as a result need only be summary of the information to be recorded in the Record of Interview Form.

SECOND AND FINAL WARNING
This form should be completed and issued to the individual within 24 hours of the formal counseling interview, because it is a second or final warning. The actions to be implemented as a result need only be a summary of the information to be recorded on the Record of Interview Form.

RECORD OF TERMINATION INTERVIEW
This form should be completed when a termination interview has been held. The form should specify the reasons for the termination, including the recent past history of counseling and warnings, the individual’s response, and an explanation of the reason for the decision to terminate the person concerned.

LETTER OF TERMINATION
A Letter of Termination must be given to an individual whose employment is to be terminated. It is critical that a termination be confirmed in written form.
DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION: CHECKLIST

INITIAL COUNSELING/FIRST FORMAL WARNING

1. The employer has documented the facts concerning the unsatisfactory performance and/or conduct of the individual.

2. An initial counseling interview has been held with the individual.

3. The individual has been given the full details of the areas of concern, and has been given the opportunity to respond and explain.

4. Where it was warranted, an investigation has been conducted to confirm or disprove the explanation given by the individual. If the response of the person was not satisfactory, then a verbal or written warning was given to the individual.

5. The individual has been informed of the options if the performance and/or attitude does not improve (e.g., dismissal, demotion).

6. A review date has been arranged for both parties to meet again (usually in about two weeks).

SECOND COUNSELING AND/OR FINAL WRITTEN WARNING

1. Details of the individual’s performance and/or conduct during the first review period were discussed with the person concerned.

2. A witness was present at the review meeting (the person can also have the opportunity to have his/her own witness present).

3. The individual was again given the opportunity to respond.

4. An investigation was conducted (unless an investigation is not required) and the individual’s response is unsatisfactory; the person has been given a Final Written Warning.

5. The individual has been given a copy of the documentation and provided with an opportunity to read it and ask questions.

6. A copy of the Final Written Warning has been placed in the file.

(continued)
DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION: CHECKLIST (concluded)

DISMISSAL

1. The individual failed to respond to the Final Warning and has been dismissed, with the manager stating the reason and that the decision is final.

2. The individual has been told what he or she is entitled to and when it can be received and/or claimed. He or she has been asked to return any property belonging to the organization. (Termination Without Notice should only be used in a summary dismissal.)

3. A termination letter outlining the reasons for termination has been provided to the individual. The appropriate forms have been signed.

4. A separation certificate (if requested by the employee) has been provided that specifies the same reasons outlined in point three above.

NOTES

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____________________________________________________________________________
RECORD OF INTERVIEW

☐ Counseling ☐ First Written Warning ☐ Final Written Warning

Individual’s name: _______________________________ Date: _________________

Position/Job title: ____________________________________________________________________________

You have attended a Formal Counseling Interview in relation to the following matters:
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

You were given opportunity to respond to the complaints outlined. Your response was:
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

(The interview can break at this stage so an investigation of issues raised can be conducted.)

Management decided to proceed with the counseling because:
1. _______________________________________________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________________________________________

A Formal Warning is to be issued and your performance is to be reviewed on _____________
to assess whether the agreed-to changes have occurred.

I, ____________________________________________, agree that this is an accurate record of the
Counseling Interview.

Signed by Individual: _________________________________________________________________________

Signed by Manager: _________________________________________________________________________

Signed by Witness: _______________________________ Date: _________________
Module Seven: Handling Unacceptable Performance

FIRST FORMAL WARNING

Individual’s name: _______________________________ Date: _______________

Position/Job title: ________________________________

On _______________, you were counseled by ________________________________ for the following reasons:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

As a result of this counseling, it is agreed that the following actions will occur:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

This is the First Warning in the company’s disciplinary procedure. Management expects that the problems discussed will be rectified by you as a result of this action. Your performance will be reviewed again in ____________ weeks at a Formal Counseling Interview, to be held on:
____________________________________________________________________________

Failure to make the necessary improvements (as discussed) or any repeat of these problems will leave the management no other option than to reconsider your future employment. This First Formal Warning and Record of Interview will be placed in your file.

Signed by Manager: ____________________________________________________________

Signed by Individual: ___________________________________________________________

Signed by Witness: __________________________________ Date: _________________
SECOND AND FINAL WARNING

Individual’s name: _____________________________________ Date: _________________

Position/Job title: ______________________________________________________________

On _______________, you were counseled by_____________________________________.

This is the second counseling interview following the First Formal Warning issued to you on
____________________________. The reasons for this counseling interview are:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

As a result of this counseling, it is agreed that the following actions will occur:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

This advice is the Second and Final Warning in the company’s disciplinary procedure.
Management expects that there will be no further instances of the problems discussed, as a
result of this action. Your performance will be reviewed again in _________________________
weeks at a Formal Counseling Interview to be held on: _______________________________

Failure to make the necessary improvements will result in termination of your employment. This
Final Warning and Record of Interview will be placed in your file.

Signed by Manager: ____________________________________________________________

Signed by Individual: ___________________________________________________________

Signed by Witness: ___________________________________ Date: _________________
RECORD OF TERMINATION INTERVIEW

Individual’s name: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Position/Job title: ______________________________________________________________

You have attended a **Termination Interview** in relation to the following matters:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

You were given an opportunity to respond to the complaints outlined. Your response was:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

(The interview can break at this stage so an investigation of the issues raised can be conducted.)

Management decided to proceed with your termination because:
1. _________________________________________________________________________
2. _________________________________________________________________________
3. _________________________________________________________________________

As a result of the interview, you were informed that your employment will be terminated with notice or with pay in lieu of notice. The notice period is ___________ weeks.

I, ______________________________, agree that this is an accurate record of the Termination.

Signed by Individual: ___________________________________________________________

Signed by Manager: ____________________________________________________________

Signed by Witness: ____________________________________ Date: _________________
LETTER OF TERMINATION

Individual’s name: _____________________________________________________________

Position/Job title: ______________________________________________________________

You are hereby advised that your employment with this organization will terminate on ___________________ and by:

- Payment in lieu of notice
- Working the period of notice
- Summary dismissal

The reason for your termination is:

1. _________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

3. _________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

4. _________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

5. _________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

Signed by Manager: ____________________________________ Date: _________________

Representing:_________________________________________
Appendix A

• The Performance Development Discussion:
  Guidelines and Action Plan............................................................ TP1–TP4

• Prior to the Performance Development Discussion:
  The Manager/Leader’s Booklet...................................................... PP1–PP4

• Prior to the Performance Development Discussion:
  The Employee’s Booklet................................................................. DD1–DD4

• The Performance Progress Update Discussion:
  Manager and Employee Booklet..................................................... UD1–UD4

• Career Planning and Development:
  Manager and Employee Action Planning Booklet........................... CP1–CP4
The Performance Development Discussion
Guidelines and Action Plan

Material for a successful performance development discussion:

- Guidelines and Action Plan
- Prior to the Performance Development Discussion: The Manager/Leader’s Booklet
- Prior to the Performance Development Discussion: The Employee’s Booklet
- Performance Update Discussion: Manager and Employee Booklet
- Career Planning and Development: Manager and Employee Action Planning Booklet
The Performance Development Discussion: Guidelines and Action Plan

What is a Performance Development Discussion?
The performance appraisal discussion, the personal development interview, and even the performance planning meeting are all different names for the same thing. In this booklet (part of a four-booklet series) we have chosen to call a formal appraisal meeting between a manager and an employee the Performance Development Discussion. We define a performance development discussion as “a planned, properly prepared and regular discussion between manager and employee concerning an individual's goals and the competencies needed to achieve future success.” This guidance booklet and separate booklets for both manager and employee provide an opportunity for both parties engaged in such a discussion to effectively plan and prepare themselves and make the whole experience positive and worthwhile.

Why bother conducting a Performance Development Discussion?
Managers are often reluctant to sit down with their employees to discuss performance. Their reasons include “We talk with each other about performance every day,” or “We know each other too well to bother with this formal stuff,” or even “We work in the same room/office and talk all the time—this is a waste of both of our time” or “We shouldn't wait for quarterly or end-of-year formal discussions to discuss performance—we should do it whenever there is a problem.” These arguments have some validity, but they are rarely more persuasive than having a well-prepared, focused, and high-quality conversation about achieving goals and doing what is necessary to achieve future success. Both parties will always benefit from a Performance Development Discussion, even if it is to only slightly adjust course or to recognize a job well done.

The Manager’s challenge
Your challenge as a manager is to maintain a progressive and systematic interest in the individual’s performance and his or her general motivation and well-being. You can do this by engaging in regular performance-update discussions and then having an end-of-cycle Performance Development Discussion to encourage an open two-way dialogue. In this discussion, the manager should focus on sharing information about targets met or missed, competency development experiences, the need for future training, career aspirations, and goals and objectives that need to be set.

The Employee’s challenge
Your challenge as an employee is to involve yourself in the Performance Management System in a positive and committed way, and to use the progress and end of cycle Performance Development Discussions as an opportunity to share information about your experiences with your manager and elicit their support for your efforts to achieve your targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Performance Development Discussion: Guidelines and Action Plan Booklet</th>
<th>This booklet provides you with introductory remarks and guidelines for successfully handling the Performance Development Discussion. A form is included for joint development of action plans around objectives and competency development.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to the Performance Development Discussion: The Manager’s Booklet</td>
<td>This booklet provides a structured format to help the manager prepare for the Performance Development Discussion and focus on the most important issues that need to be covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to the Performance Development Discussion: The Employee’s Booklet</td>
<td>This booklet provides a structured format to help the employee prepare for a Performance Development Discussion and focus on the most important issues that need to be covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Performance Update Discussion</td>
<td>This booklet is structured to help the manager and the employee focus on improving performance and making short-term adjustments as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Planning and Development: Manager and Employee Action Planning</td>
<td>This booklet focuses on the development of the employee. It will help employees identify their broad career interests and help managers to record their forecast of long term individual potential.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GOAL/OBJECTIVE SETTING

Name of Appraisee: ______________________________________ Position: ______________________

Department/Location: ___________________________________ Review period: ________________

This Goal/Objective Setting form is used to communicate performance standards and should form the basis of the end of cycle evaluation.

INSTRUCTIONS Individual/Appraisee: At the beginning of the review period, describe up to five goals/expected results that you will achieve in the next review period. Prioritize those goals/expected results as to their importance to your job, using a scale of 1 = low to 5 = high. Write the organization’s or supervisor’s goal to which your goals/expected results relate in the “Related Goal” area. At the end of the review period, complete the “Results Achieved” portion. Supervisor: At the end of the review period, complete the “Supervisor’s summary statement” section and assign a rating for the review period.

1. Goals/Accountabilities/Expected Results

Prioritize the goals/expected results in terms of their importance to the job being performed (1–5).

Related goal (organization’s or supervisor’s goal):

Goals/expected results: Results achieved:

__________________________________________ _____________________________________
__________________________________________ _____________________________________
__________________________________________ _____________________________________

Supervisor’s summary statement:

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

2. Goals/Accountabilities/Expected Results

Prioritize the goals/expected results in terms of their importance to the job being performed (1–5).

Related goal (organization’s or supervisor’s goal):

Goals/expected results: Results achieved:

__________________________________________ _____________________________________
__________________________________________ _____________________________________
__________________________________________ _____________________________________

Supervisor’s summary statement:

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

Rating

Exceeds performance requirements
Meets performance requirements
Does not meet performance requirements

Copy this page to record other goals or objectives for the review period ahead.
The Janus Performance Management System allows you to develop a list of competencies (from a total library of 36) that are likely to be most relevant to the job role and goals/objectives that have been set. A minimum of three and a maximum of ten should be chosen.

The appraisee should list 3–10 competencies jointly identified by manager and appraisee, and then rate each of them on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ________</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<td>3. ________</td>
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<td>4. ________</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. ________</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. ________</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. ________</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<td>8. ________</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. ________</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. _________</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List your three greatest strengths:

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________

List your three greatest opportunities for improvement:

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________

The individual appraisee and the manager can each complete this form. The individual should copy this blank page and give it to their manager to complete. Notes can then be compared at the Performance Development Discussion.
Prior to the Performance Development Discussion

The Manager/Leader’s Booklet

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for the Performance Development Discussion. The discussion acts as a formal support mechanism for both parties to establish a basis for sustained development.

Date of the Performance Development Discussion:

Time:

Place:

Manager/Leader:

Employee:
Prior to the Performance Development Discussion: The Manager/Leader’s Booklet

This manager/leader’s booklet is designed as a support tool for the successful execution of the Performance Development Discussion. A successful performance development discussion requires a dialogue where both the manager and the employee each have responsibility for and commitment to positive and constructive outcomes. The discussion dialogue should concern organizational development, personal development, and the strengthening of cooperation between the individual and the wider team. The Performance Development Discussion is a planned and regular activity with continuous follow-up. Work your way through this booklet quietly and calmly; make sure that you record the time and place in your planner and make sure that the meeting is scheduled for a pleasant environment where there will be no interruptions from telephones or people.

**Overall view:** Think about the following factors that in varying degrees of importance are all significant in your task as manager/leader. Is it important in your discussion with employees to have an overall view? Are there any factors that are more important than others?

Describe the key purpose of this Performance Development Discussion:

__________________________________________________________________________________________

COMMUNICATION IN THE PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION

Try first to understand in order to be understood. Take the initiative for a good dialogue using broad opening questions: Tell me about the tasks in your job. What do you think is the most important aspect or priority in your work at the moment? How would you describe our relationship? Which goals have been most challenging and why?

Follow up your questions: Interesting. Tell me more . . . What do you mean when you say . . .? Do you see any possibility of improving . . .? What would happen if you tried . . .?

Do not dwell on particular mistakes and negative experiences. What we are looking for is a sign that you have learned from experience, so we can find better solutions for the future.

Is there anything from previous progress discussions that needs to be further discussed or acted on?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Describe your main role/task as manager or leader in supporting this individual:

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Think about the past twelve months and your own performance as a manager or coach and feedback-giver. Use the space to the right to reflect on your strengths and what your development needs are in terms of supporting team members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“I am good at this” (strengths)</th>
<th>“I can improve this” (development needs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PP-2
You can enhance the Performance Development Discussion by filling in the profile/analysis below. The results will provide thoughts and openings for a useful two-way dialogue. Avoid being overly defensive about your answers. Be as honest as you can. In all improvement work, it is important to look both at the present situation and at past experience in order to find ideas for the next stage—action for development.

Evaluate the following statements as you understand yourself to be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Able to:</th>
<th>Not so good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide relevant information</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set clear working goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give praise, support, feedback</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be creative/innovative</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply fair controls</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriately handle conflict</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show enthusiasm and be a driving force</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with clarity</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be visionary, oriented toward the future</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be available/accessible to employees</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_____________________________________________

_____________________________________________

_____________________________________________

Evaluate the following statements as you understand the employee to be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Able to:</th>
<th>Not so good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take initiative</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be responsible and accountable for own tasks/goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be team-oriented</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be capable of innovation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make effective new suggestions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle change</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet customer needs</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide the manager with feedback</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search efficiently for information/data</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop his/her skills and learn from mistakes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Find time during the Performance Development Discussion to look at differences and to discuss what needs to happen in order for both parties to close any major gaps in perception.

Before the discussion, list three or four areas that you know you should talk about the performance discussion.

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
With the support of the analysis set out on pages 2 and 3 of this booklet, it is now time to think about the future. Write down your questions and thoughts that you would like to discuss/explore further with the employee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The company/organization</th>
<th>The employee’s department/team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working environment</th>
<th>Regarding the employee’s personal needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For myself as manager/leader</th>
<th>The employee’s skills/training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other areas: finance, administration, technology, organization, etc.</th>
<th>In which ways can the manager support and motivate the employee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

EVALUATE THE PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION

Each party can use the Janus Performance Management System tailored competency assessment to generate an output report, make an evaluation, and then discuss the similarities and differences in views.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each of us was open and honest.</th>
<th>Totally agree</th>
<th>Do not agree at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The discussion helped with continued employee development.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We listened actively to each other.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were constructive during the discussion.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The atmosphere was pleasant and positively focused.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did I succeed in putting forward what I wanted during the discussion?

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

Summarize and draw up a joint action plan using the Guidelines and Action Plan Booklet.
Prior to the Performance Development Discussion
The Employee’s Booklet

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for the Performance Development Discussion. The discussion provides a formal support mechanism for both parties to establish a basis for sustained development.

Date of the Performance Development Discussion:

Time:
Place:
Employee:
Manager/Leader:
Prior to the Performance Development Discussion: The Employee’s Booklet

This employee’s booklet is designed as a support tool for the successful execution of an interim or end-of-cycle Performance Development Interview or Discussion. A successful performance development discussion requires a dialogue where both the manager and the employee each have responsibility for and commitment to positive and constructive outcomes. The discussion dialogue should concern any broad enterprise issues that need to be discussed, relative performance against specific objectives that have been set, and personal development targets and progress. Ideally you should work your way through the booklet quietly and calmly. Make sure that you record the time and place in your planner.

**Overall view:** Think about the following factors that in varying degrees of importance are all significant in your work. Which of these factors are most important to you?

Describe the key tasks in your work:

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Is there anything from a previous appraisal discussion that needs to be further discussed?

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

During the past year, I have been pleased with my overall work situation—my tasks and the pleasant atmosphere. (Circle your rating on the scale.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totally agree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Do not agree at all</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What are you particularly pleased with?

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

What are you less pleased with?

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Think about the past twelve months and your own performance and levels of competency you demonstrated. Use the space to the right to indicate where you believe your strengths and development needs are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“I am good at this” (strengths)</th>
<th>“I can improve this” (development needs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DD-2
You can enhance the Performance Development Discussion by filling in the profile/analysis below. The results will provide thoughts and openings for a useful two-way dialogue. Avoid being overly defensive about your answers. Be as honest as you can. In all improvement work, it is important to look both at the present situation and at past experience in order to find ideas for the next stage—action for development.

Evaluate the following statements as you understand **yourself** to be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Able to:</th>
<th>Not so good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take initiative</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be responsible and accountable for own tasks/goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be team-oriented</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be capable of innovation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make effective new suggestions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle change</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet customer needs</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide the manager with feedback</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search efficiently for information/data</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop his/her skills and learn from mistakes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluate the following statements as you understand **the employee** to be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Able to:</th>
<th>Not so good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide relevant information</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set clear working goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give praise, support, feedback</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be creative/innovative</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply fair controls</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriately handle conflict</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show enthusiasm and be a driving force</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with clarity</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be visionary, oriented toward the future</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be available/accessable to employees</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Find time during the Performance Development Discussion to look at differences and to discuss what needs to happen in order for both parties to close any major gaps in perception.

**Before the discussion, list three or four areas that you know you should talk about the performance discussion.**

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
With the support of the analysis set out on pages 2 and 3 of this booklet, it is now time to think about the future. Write down your important questions and thoughts that you would like to discuss/explore with your manager.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The company/organization</th>
<th>My department/team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The working environment</th>
<th>Regarding my own personal needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The manager/leader</th>
<th>Own skills/training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other areas: finance, administration, technology, organization, etc.</th>
<th>Look ahead two years: Which major working tasks would you like to have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**EVALUATE THE PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION**

Each party can use the Janus Performance Management System tailored competency assessment to generate an output report, make an evaluation, and then discuss the similarities and differences in views.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totally agree</th>
<th>Do not agree at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Each of us was open and honest.
- The discussion helped with continued employee development.
- We listened actively to each other.
- We were constructive during the discussion.
- The atmosphere was pleasant and positively focused.

**Did I succeed in putting forward what I wanted during the discussion?**

------------------------------------------------------------------------

Summarize and draw up a joint action plan using the Guidelines and Action Plan Booklet.
The Performance Progress Update Discussion
Manager and Employee Booklet

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for the Performance Update Discussion. The discussion provides a formal support mechanism for both parties to check progress and make necessary adjustments.

Date of the Performance Update Discussion:

Time:

Place:

Employee:

Manager/Leader:
# The Performance Update Discussion

## PERFORMANCE UPDATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: _________________________</th>
<th>Title: ___________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review period: __________________</td>
<td>Location: ________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager’s name: __________________</td>
<td>Manager’s title: __________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quarter Focus Activities and Milestones

Record here the first-quarter focus data from the plan or the previous Performance Update form.

- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________

### Results/Achievements

Record here the results against the PERIOD focus activities and milestones.

- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________

### Roadblocks Faced or Upcoming Issues

Record here anything that prevented you from reaching targets for goals or accountabilities AND/OR any issues that are likely to affect progress toward your next quarter or Full-Year Targets.

- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________

### Next-Quarter Focus Activities and Milestones

Record here the activities and milestones that will be the focus of the next quarter.

- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
- ____________________________________________
## PERIODIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW FORM

### Competencies
* (List all the relevant competencies for this position)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency 1</th>
<th>Progress Comments</th>
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<tbody>
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### Development on the Job

Both the appraisee and the manager should provide an assessment of the progress made by the individual in meeting his/her personal developmental objectives. This assessment should be expressed as being **On Target (OT)** or **Below Target (BT)**.

### Additional Comments (Optional)

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Next Steps
Fill in this section of the Progress Performance Update form based on how you are tracking now and what adjustments in the near term you would like to make.

_______________________________________________________________________________________
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Ask yourself the following planning questions before you attend your Progress Performance Update session:

1. Did I do everything I could to make certain that my objectives were met?

2. Did I demonstrate initiative and proactivity in my approach to goal achievement?

3. Am I accepting responsibility, or blaming others or events?

4. Did I blame myself, or did I take responsibility and set plans for recovery?

5. Did I focus on problems, or on solutions?

6. Did I mistakenly expect others to complete tasks (take action) that I should have done myself?

7. What else could I have done/what can I do differently?

8. What have I learned?
Career Planning and Development
Manager and Employee Action Planning

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for the Performance Development Discussion. The discussion provides an opportunity for the organization to get the best out of the individual, and an opportunity for the individual to get the most from the organization.

Date of the Performance Update Discussion:

Time:

Place:

Employee:

Manager/Leader:
EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER INTEREST FORM

The employee should use these two pages that follow to record their career interests and aspirations and to note their personal development plans for the coming year.

Name: ___________________________________________ Job Title: ____________________________
Department/Location: _______________________________ Date: _______________________________

1. How have your knowledge, skills, and competencies improved during the past year? Cite examples.
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

2. What are your career aspirations for the short term (the next 1–2 years) and the longer term? If you wish to be considered for assignments to any other function in order to fulfil these aspirations, please indicate.
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

3. Are there ways in which your supervisor/manager can help you do your job better and help you prepare for future career opportunities? Please list them below.
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

4. Are you willing to relocate? If yes, please describe any relocation restrictions.
____________________________________________________________________________________
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# DESIRED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Drawing on your performance development discussions with your manager use the space below to write out your desired personal development and training plan for the next twelve months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development area:</th>
<th>Action to take:</th>
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<td>__________________ Target date:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development area:</th>
<th>Action to take:</th>
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<td>__________________ Target date:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development area:</th>
<th>Action to take:</th>
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<td>__________________ Target date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The manager should review the employee’s career interests and development plans and then draw upon the information to forecast their future short- and long-term potential. Sharing this information with the employee is at the discretion of the manager.

### 1. Succession Planning

#### SHORT-TERM CAREER PLANNING (ONE YEAR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. PROMOTE NOW</th>
<th>B. HOLD</th>
<th>C. OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most-likely promotion:</strong> Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List title (for Div/Function/Dept)</td>
<td>When</td>
<td>Pressure to promote next year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Must</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>2. Should</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. No need to</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>1. Irreplaceable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Most suitable</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>3. Replaceable</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. For development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Too new to tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative promotion:</strong> (Enter details in space below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position no.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sal. grade</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### LONGER-TERM CAREER PLANNING (3–5 YEARS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. PROMOTE IN FUTURE</th>
<th>E. HOLD</th>
<th>F. OTHER ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most-likely promotion:</strong> Details</td>
<td>No. of salary grades from present</td>
<td>When</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List title (for Div/Function/Dept)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Transfer/develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Demote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Performance improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Outsource/place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Retire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>1. Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. 1st six months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. 2nd six months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative promotion:</strong> (Enter details in space provided below)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position no.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sal. grade</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Bench Strength

Is the employee nominated for: High Potential

Consider where the greatest value to the organization is over the next 3 years: Supervisor/Manager Individual Contributor

### 3. Employee Career Interest/Cross Function or Overseas Nominations (Next 12 Months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position title</th>
<th>Position no.</th>
<th>Salary Grade</th>
<th>Function/Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the employee willing to relocate? DOMESTIC Yes No FOREIGN Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments on Recommended Action

Supervisor’s signature Date