

Running head: PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Performance Evaluations

University of Kansas

Performance Evaluations

### *Introduction*

In the following evaluation, the performance appraisal process for the position of Latina Community Outreach Liaison at Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM) is critiqued. A revised performance appraisal process is recommended for this position and described by the author. Additionally, a critique of the revised performance appraisal process is included. Lastly, the evaluation concludes with a brief summation of major points. [good](#)

### *Critique of Current Process*

*Process description.* When hired by Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM), the policy for performance appraisal in the New Employee Handbook (2004) notifies employees that their “job performance will be reviewed after [their] first ninety days of employment and then at least once a year thereafter by [their] supervisor” (p. 23). An additional policy not printed in the employee handbook specifies the actual process of the performance appraisal system, though this policy is not readily available to non-supervisory staff. In fact, it seems this policy may only be directed to the attention of supervisors. [interesting](#)

Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM) uses two forms of instruments for performance appraisal: a self-assessment instrument and a performance appraisal instrument (G. Taylor Smith, personal communication, April 5, 2006). PPKM has molded the instruments for type and level of staff. Consequently, clinic staff and administrative staff complete separate versions of the appraisal instruments. Furthermore, instruments for non-supervisory staff differ from instruments for supervisory staff at the clinic and at the administration level. With that said, this evaluation will focus on the instruments designed for administrative staff because the Latina Community Outreach Liaison qualifies as this level of employee. [good](#)

According to Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri's (PPKM) performance appraisal system, the first step for employees in the appraisal process is to complete a self-assessment of performance (T. Allen-Ehrhart, personal communication, April 12, 2006).

Depending whether employees are new or existing determines which self-assessment instrument is completed. New employees complete the ninety-day self-assessment instrument and existing employees complete the regular employee self-assessment instrument.

After an employee completes the self-assessment, the supervisor is to review the employee's self-assessment of performance prior to completing the actual employee performance appraisal (G. Taylor Smith, personal communication, April 5, 2006). The supervisor is to take the employee's self-assessment, as well as records kept of performance into consideration when completing the performance appraisal. However, after speaking with one supervisor, this author discovered that this procedure is not always followed (T. Allen-Ehrhart, personal communication, April 12, 2006). T. Allen-Ehrhart indicated she prefers to complete the employee performance appraisal instrument prior to reviewing the self-assessment of the employee to maintain a more objective evaluation of performance (personal communication, April 12, 2006). [Interesting](#)

Once the supervisor completes all sections of the employee appraisal instrument, the next level supervisor reads and discusses the evaluation with the reviewing supervisor. After the next level supervisor review, the appraisal interview takes place between the employee and the reviewing supervisor. During this meeting, the performance appraisal is reviewed, and the employee is given the opportunity to make written comments regarding the evaluation in the comments section of the form. However, the employee can chose to gather his/her thoughts before making written comments. After any comments have been added to the form, the

employee's signature finalizes the performance appraisal. The employee is provided with a copy of the appraisal and the original is placed in the employee's personnel file. [Good.](#)

*Instrument content.* The self-assessment instruments (ninety-day and regular) currently used in the performance appraisal process are almost identical. In fact, differences between the two instruments are marginal at best. Consequently, each instrument contains a modified essay format with nine questions and a trait/behavior checklist (Kettner, 2002). [Good.](#)

On the other hand, the employee performance appraisal instrument is comprised of seven sections and is eight pages long. Nevertheless, only the first four sections account for the employee performance rating. Sections one and three of the instrument are best aligned with a trait/behavior checklist format, while section two aligns with a job duties format (Kettner, 2002). Additionally, section four closely resembles a management by objective format (Kettner, 2002). Each of the sections is weighted, with most emphasis on major job responsibilities. The sections and their titles, as well as the percentage of the total performance rating are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1

*Performance Appraisal Sections*

Section	Name	% of Total Rating
1	Values & Ethics	15%
2	Major Job Responsibilities	50%
3	Performance Assessment	15%
4	Performance Results & Objectives	20%
5	Employee Development	NA

6	Goals/Projects for Next Period	NA
7	Employee Comments	NA

---

As described in Kettner (2002), sections one through four are based on a scaling approach. The range of the scale is reflected in Table 2.

Table 2

*Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri Performance Scale*

---

Rating		Performance Level
5	=	Consistently exceeds
4	=	Meets standards plus
3	=	Meets standards
2	=	Marginal
1	=	Does not meet standards

---

*Strengths, limitations, and suggested improvements.* Because the Latina Community Outreach Liaison is a one year grant funded position, this position is primarily evaluated on the objectives set forth in the grant. Evaluation according to Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri's (PPKM) performance system and instruments as described is not compulsory (G. Taylor Smith, personal communication, April 5, 2006). Even so, the current individual\* in this position has been evaluated based on both the objectives set forth in the grant and also based on PPKM's performance system.

\*After the completion of this author's practicum, C. Ochoa resigned from her position as Latina Community Outreach Liaison. [Wow!](#)

Utilizing a combination of the two forms of evaluation is a strength of the performance appraisal process for the Latina Community Outreach Liaison position. Incorporating Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri's (PPKM) performance appraisal tools into the performance appraisal process for this position provides a holistic evaluation of performance. Another strength of the performance appraisal process is the use of self-assessment. According to T. Allen-Ehrhart, completing the self-assessment provides employees with the opportunity to bring additional or unknown accomplishments to their supervisor's attention (personal communication, April 12, 2006). Because the Latina Community Outreach Liaison position was recently repositioned from clinical services to the education department within external affairs, the self-assessment instrument will be especially important during the annual performance appraisal. [Good.](#)

An additional strength of the performance system include key features identified by Edwards and Sproull (1985), including the features of multiple raters, rater feedback, documentation, and systematic communication of rating results to ratees (as cited in Kettner, 2002). In terms of multiple raters, the self-assessment form at PPKM provides space for employees to indicate the names of any other management personnel that should provide input on their performance appraisal. Furthermore, the feature of rater feedback occurs at PPKM when the next level supervisor reviews performance appraisals with reviewing supervisors. During this review, the next level supervisor provides mentoring and coaching on the various methods and techniques used by reviewing supervisors in evaluating employees. Lastly, the feature of communicating ratings to employees takes place during the appraisal interview. [Excellent review of strengths.](#)

Limitations in the performance appraisal process for the Latina Community Outreach Liaison position also exist, and suggestions for improvements have been made. According to C. Ochoa, current Latina Community Outreach Liaison, the employee self-assessment form is not applicable to her position (personal communication, April 10, 2006). After some probing, this author discovered the Latina Community Outreach Liaison was actually given the incorrect instrument to complete at her ninety-day evaluation by her supervisor at that time. In fact, she was not even given the self-assessment instrument at all; she was given the manager employee performance appraisal instrument. Furthermore, the Latina Community Outreach Liaison never met with her supervisor to discuss the evaluation (C. Ochoa, personal communication, April 10, 2006). Obviously, a discrepancy between stated procedures and actual practices exist in the organization around performance appraisals. [Yes.](#)

In reference to the employee performance appraisal instrument, T. Allen Ehrhart identified the performance results and objectives section as a limitation of the instrument (personal communication, April, 12, 2006). Because objectives are being maintained on the performance appraisal, they tend to be tucked away in a file and forgotten about until the next evaluation period (T. Allen-Ehrhart, personal communication, April 12, 2006). To improve this process, T. Allen-Ehrhart suggested utilizing work plans to evaluate performance results and objectives because work plans are continuously revisited throughout the year (personal communication, April 12, 2006). Other suggested improvements to the performance appraisal process include the development of a policy regarding the performance appraisal process for grant-funded employees, and the deliberate explanation of the performance appraisal process and performance instruments to new employees at orientation. [Good.](#)

*Comparison to other agencies.* Because Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM) provides reproductive health care services, this author chose two agencies to compare the performance appraisal process with that also provide health care related services: Children's Mercy and KC Free Health Clinic. Children's Mercy's appraisal instrument utilizes a scaling approach similar to that used in PPKM's employee performance appraisal. However, Children's Mercy's instrument is designed to evaluate a specific position within the organization. Moreover, the Children's Mercy instrument is much more succinct than PPKM's instrument.

Good.

On the other hand, KC Free Health Clinic's instrument is quite similar to Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri's (PPKM) employee performance appraisal instrument. In fact, PPKM's instrument asks supervisors to list three to five major job responsibilities of the employee under review and to rate them using a scaling approach just as the KC Free Health Clinic instrument asks. Moreover, the KC Free Health Clinic instrument includes a trait/behavior checklist as does PPKM's instrument. The major difference between the two instruments is that KC Free Health Clinic only assesses employees' performance in these two areas mentioned. PPKM's instrument assesses performance in four areas. Good.

*Relationship to organizational climate.* According to Taylor and Giannantonio (1993), Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM) is a combination of a fortress career system and a baseball team career system, though PPKM identifies more closely with a baseball team career system for the major activities of formation, adaptation, and termination (Taylor & Giannantonio, 1993). PPKM's active environment does not allow the organization much time to help employees adapt to their environment. Consequently, employees are either able to keep up with the fast paced environment (adaptation) or they are not (termination /turnover).

As a result, new employees unfamiliar with the performance appraisal process are expected to learn the process as they go. A cycle begins early on in the organization and as employees advance into higher level supervisory positions, organizational practices regarding performance appraisals are often inconsistent with actual written procedures. Supervisors practice the performance appraisal process the way they learned in the organization because training is simply unavailable. [Excellent.](#)

*Consideration of diversity.* After completing the job analysis for the Latina Community Outreach Liaison position and after assessing the role that culture, ethnicity, and gender played this author aligns Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM) more closely with an identity blind approach to diversity (Richard & Johnson, 2001). As an identity blind organization, workers are evaluated more on individual merit and less upon diversity objectives (Richard & Johnson, 2001). For example, the only piece of PPKM's employee performance appraisal instrument that hints at diversity falls under the values and ethics section. In this section, employees are rated on the value of respecting others. Satisfactory performance in this area is defined as "an employee [who] treats all people with dignity and respect and values cultural uniqueness of others." In this case, satisfactory performance is quite ambiguous and diversity relates only to cultural differences. [Excellent.](#)

#### *Revised Process*

*Description.* Employees at Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM) will be introduced to the performance appraisal process at orientation. The policy outlining the process of the performance system will be presented and explained, along with performance appraisal instruments and criteria for evaluation. From the beginning, it is important for employees to understand the criteria for which they are being evaluated (Weinbach, 2003).

[Good.](#) After orientation, questions regarding the performance appraisal process will be directed to the employee's supervisor.

When time comes for a formal written performance appraisal (see Appendix A), the first step in the appraisal process is for an employee to complete a self-assessment of performance. The self-assessment of performance instrument contains the same content as the instrument to be completed by the supervisor. After an employee completes the self-assessment of performance, the supervisor is to review the employee's self-assessment prior to completing the employee performance appraisal instrument. The supervisor is to take the employee's self-assessment, as well as records kept of performance into consideration when completing the employee performance appraisal. [Good.](#)

Once the supervisor completes all sections of the employee appraisal, the next level supervisor reviews the evaluation. After the next level supervisor review, the appraisal interview takes place between the employee and the reviewing supervisor where the performance appraisal is reviewed. The supervisor and the employee both sign the form which finalizes the performance appraisal. The employee is informed that if he/she wishes to appeal the appraisal, he/she has seven working days to file the appeal in writing to the Vice President of Human Resources (see Appendix A). The employee is provided with a copy of the appraisal and the original is placed in the employee's personnel file.

*Instrument content.* The self-assessment instrument content is now the same as the employee performance appraisal instrument content. Previously, the employee and supervisor were responding to two instruments with different content. Now, the supervisor can clearly identify points of agreement and disagreement between supervisor and employee regarding performance (Weinbach, 2003). [Good.](#)

Specifically, the revised employee performance appraisal instrument is comprised of six sections and is seven pages long (see Appendix B). The first four sections still account for the employee performance rating, but the weighting for each section has been altered, as well as the name of section three. The sections of the new instrument are reflected in Table 3.

Table 3

*Revised Performance Appraisal Sections*

Section #	Name	% of Total Rating
1	Values & Ethics	10%
2	Major Job Responsibilities	45%
3	Performance Traits	10%
4	Performance Results & Objectives	35%
5	Employee Development	NA
6	Employee Comments	NA

Changes to instrument content include altering definitions of satisfactory performance for respecting others and work relationships. In section four, grant-funded employees are now specifically addressed under specific goals and objectives. In addition, section five has been reconfigured to reflect a strengths based approach to employee development, rather than a deficits approach. Lastly, the option has been added for employees to indicate if they agree or disagree with the appraisal of their performance. [Good.](#)

*Performance appraisal policies.* See Appendix A.

*Critique of Revised Process*

*Strengths, limitations, and suggested improvements.* One major strength of the revised process is incorporating grant-funded employees into the standard Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM) performance appraisal system. Because management by objectives is already built into the performance instrument, grant-funded employees can easily use their grant objectives for this section of the performance appraisal. As a result, all PPKM employees will now be evaluated according to the same criteria. [Good.](#)

An additional strength to the process is the congruence between the self-appraisal instrument content and the employee performance appraisal instrument content. T. Allen-Ehrhart noted that this change allows for simple comparison between employee and supervisor ratings (personal communication, April 24, 2006). Moreover, additional key features identified by Edwards and Sproull (1985), including professional procedures and appeals are now present in the revised process (Kettner, 2002). [Good.](#)

Limitations in the new performance appraisal process for the Latina Community Outreach Liaison exist. Obviously, a discrepancy between stated procedures and actual practices around performance appraisal could still occur despite increased communication around the performance appraisal system. In reference to the employee performance appraisal instrument, the performance results and objectives section remains very similar to the original instrument even though this is an area that was identified as needing improvement. However, in order to make the instrument useable for grant-funded employees, it was essential to maintain this section's structure. [Good.](#)

Moreover, the instrument remains very generic and applicable to all non-supervisory administrative employees. In the future, it may be worth time and effort to create performance

appraisals unique to each position in the organization. Moreover, the areas in which employees are rated deserve to be reviewed and perhaps altered. For instance, the performance traits section may need to be reworked to include such areas as innovation, flexibility, quality of work, etc.

*Relationship to organizational climate.* The revised performance appraisal process definitely challenges the existing organizational climate at Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM). [Yes.](#) The revised process requires the organization to devote at least some time to help employees adapt to their environment (in this case, adapt to the performance appraisal system). Once the process becomes transparent, practices should become consistent with policies, and performance appraisals should not be anticipated with as much anxiety because everyone will be informed.

*Consideration of diversity.* Revising the performance appraisal process does not change the fact that Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM) is an identity blind organization. However, attempts were made in the revised process to consider diversity of employees. For example, the definition of satisfactory performance for respecting others was expanded from “an employee [who] treats all people with dignity and respect and values cultural uniqueness of others” to “an employee [who] treats all people with dignity and respect; exhibits cultural competence; is open to different perspectives; and is nonjudgmental”. Moreover, with consideration of the diversity of job types using this evaluation, each section was reweighted with most emphasis placed on major job responsibilities and performance results and objectives. Lastly, an avenue for appealing the performance appraisal was created so that if an employee and supervisor cannot agree on certain aspects of performance, the employee has the option to present his/her case to an appeals committee. [Excellent.](#)

*Conclusion*

*Summation.* The performance appraisal process and instruments for the position of Latina Community Outreach Liaison were critiqued. Because the Latina Community Outreach Liaison is a one year grant-funded position, this position is not required to be evaluated using Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri's (PPKM) performance system and instruments. Even so, this position has been evaluated in this manner up to now. Performance appraisals for the Latina Community Outreach Liaison position and for grant-funded positions in general are heavily weighed on objectives specified in the grant. With this in mind, the revised process created a set of policies for the appraisal process and created revised instruments both of which are applicable to administrative positions, including grant-funded positions. Good.

*Impact on learning.* Before this project, this author was unaware of the "science" involved with performance appraisal. Much must be taken into consideration from process to instrument format and content. After speaking with staff at Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri (PPKM), this author discovered their surprise at this author's exposure to the performance appraisal topic. Nevertheless, they were open to allowing exploration of the system. This author is thankful for the practical knowledge gained from this project and its potential usefulness in the future. Good.

## References

- Kettner, P. M. (2002). *Achieving excellence in the management of human service organizations*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri. (2004). *Employee Handbook*. Unpublished internal document.
- Richard, O. C., & Johnson, N. B., (2001). Understanding the impact of human resource diversity practices on firm performance. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 13(2), 177-195.
- Taylor, M. S., & Giannantonio, C. M. (1993). Forming, adapting, and terminating the employment relationship: A review of the literature from individual organizational, and interactionist perspectives. *Journal of Management*, 19(2), 461-515.
- Weinbach, R.W. (2003). *The Social Worker as Manager: A Practical Guide to Success* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

## Appendix A

### Performance Appraisal Policies

#### *Section 1.1 Performance Appraisals*

- 1.1.1 *Format.* All employees, including grant-funded employees shall have a formal written performance appraisal completed by their immediate supervisor using the employee appraisal instrument which employs a mixture of methods including a modified trait/behavior checklist and a modified job duties checklist in combination with a management by objectives format.
- 1.1.2 *Timing.* A formal written appraisal of performance shall be made in the following circumstances: after an employee's first ninety days of employment, annually, or at any time an employee is promoted. Annual appraisals shall be completed between March 1 and April 30.
- 1.1.3 *Process.* Both employee and supervisor shall complete their designated appraisal instruments prior to the scheduled appraisal meeting. The employee's self-appraisal of performance shall be received by the supervisor prior to the appraisal interview. With consideration of the employee's self-appraisal, the supervisor shall produce a single document which shall be reviewed by the next level supervisor. After the next level supervisor review, the performance appraisal shall be reviewed and signed by both employee and supervisor in the appraisal interview.

- 1.1.4 *Appeals.* When there are disagreements on matters associated with performance appraisal, they shall be noted on the performance appraisal instrument. An employee who wishes to appeal the performance appraisal shall do so within seven working days of the appraisal interview. The employee shall notify the Vice President of Human Resources the reason for appeal in writing. The Vice President of Human Resources shall arrange for an appeals committee to review the performance appraisal appeal. The appeals committee shall include two persons representing the rank of the employee who filed the appeal, two persons representing the rank of the person who completed the appraisal, and the Vice President of Human Resources. Demographic characteristics of the committee shall be representative of the demographics of the agency. The appeals committee shall have five working days after the appeal was filed to make a decision. The committee's decision shall be submitted in writing to the Vice President of Human Resources and shall be considered final. The decision shall be revealed to the employee within seven working days after the appeal was filed. The decision shall be documented and placed in the employee's personnel file.
- 1.1.5 *Merit increases.* Merit increases shall be determined by performance appraisal ratings in combination with where employees lie in their salary range. Employee's who are performing well, but are at the top of their salary range shall not receive as much of a merit increase as an employee who is performing at the same level, but who is at the bottom of their salary range. [Excellent](#).

Wow! You did an outstanding job on this assignment! You covered everything required and presented the information in a succinct and logical manner. I especially appreciated the level of attention given to the organizational climate and diversity. I was also disappointed to hear that the Latina Community Outreach person resigned; however, based on what I heard all semester, this comes as no surprise. Great work! Grade = 100