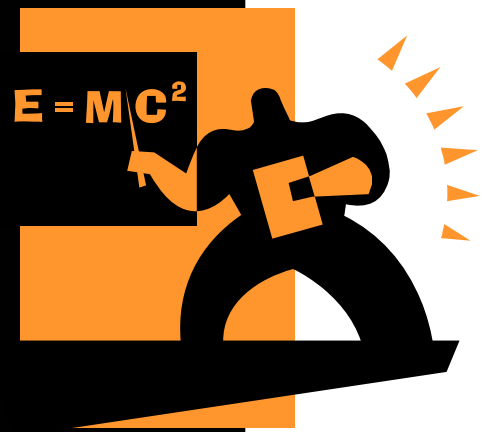


# Better, Not Bitter:



## Using Coaching and Appraisals to Improve Performance

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### I. Coaching: Communicating, Motivating, Disciplining, and Rewarding

**“World’s greatest management principle: you can work miracles by having faith in others. To get the best out of people, choose to think and believe the best about them. ~ Unknown**

#### Coaching Key Concepts

- Purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_ employees, not \_\_\_\_\_
- Is \_\_\_\_\_



Coaching <i>Is Not</i>	Coaching <i>Is</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Off-the-cuff.” Talking to employees when time permits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planned. Talking <i>with</i> employees on a continuous basis.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Setting goals and defining the parameters for success.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involving employees with goal-setting, jointly measuring success, and linking business goals to employees’ goals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Telling employees how they are performing... concentrating on what is wrong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Asking employees what they think of their performance and focusing on developing/improving skills.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Instructing employees in policies and procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changing the system (organization, policies, and procedures) to help employees’ performance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Doing the thinking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching others “how to think,” supporting entrepreneurial thinking, and accepting mistakes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communicating job duties and tasks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jointly determining performance expectations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serving as a supervisor who directs employees’ efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Forging a partnership with employees who <b>want</b> to work with you, understanding their personal goals, thus increasing motivation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Being a cheerleader when times are good, and rewarding employees with set rewards and recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing support in all times. Rewarding employees with personal, individualized rewards.</li> </ul>

**Top 7 Coaching Essentials**

1. Jointly \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ to improve performance. *Effective Methods for Improving:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* Questions for Development: \*\***

What would you like to do? What potential solutions do you see?  
What might the consequences be of that action?

3. Give advice \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



4. Use \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_

Negative Problem Statement	Positive Opportunity Statement (Rephrasing to show benefit of changing.)
Your dress is improper for the office.	I think you'll get (greater respect/more sales/taken more seriously) when you wear business suits/higher-cut necklines/more subdued colors.
You <i>never</i> get your work done on time.	This report is ( <b>not</b> "you are") two days late. We had to postpone the compilation report because of that ( <b>not</b> "because of you"), which caused three people to have to work late last night. When reports are submitted on time, everyone's work is easier, and people will feel you are competent and a team player. What could WE have done to have you to submit it timely?



**APPLICATION: Turn a "Problem Statement" into a "Positive Opportunity Statement"**

Your attitude is bad.	When I hear negative thoughts, I think you don't care about the company's success...or your own. Is that the message you want to convey? Do you think others would view you better if you conveyed a more positive message? How would that be of benefit to you? What can we do to improve how you are perceived?

5. \_\_\_\_\_ for positive action



**TOOL: 9 Secrets to Making Criticism Productive and Effective Page 5**

6. Provide \_\_\_\_\_

1. Specifics: Why do I think this was good performance? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Effect: What positive effect did the performance have? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Support: Belief the good performance will continue. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Be \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Performance Appraisal**

**"One man's word is no man's word; we should quietly hear all sides." ~ Unknown**

**Effective Performance Appraisals' Key Concepts**

- Purpose is \_\_\_\_\_
- It is a \_\_\_\_\_



### 7 Steps for Creating Effective Performance Appraisals

1. Measure an employee's job performance against a \_\_\_\_\_

**Answers the Questions:** Were standards/ expectations met? Were objectives and goals achieved?

2. Use \_\_\_\_\_ as foundation

3. Provide \_\_\_\_\_ so employee understands performance

4. Jointly set new \_\_\_\_\_


5. Jointly determine \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer the questions:** What skills need improving? How can they be improved?

6. Take legal precautions

 **TOOL: 14 Factors to Evaluate a Performance Appraisal for Legal Considerations Page 6**

7. Document personnel actions

 **TOOL: Resource Book: Effective Phrases for Performance Appraisals** by James E. Neal, Jr.  
Information available at [www.management-mentor.com](http://www.management-mentor.com) (Click on Resources & Tools)

 **TOOL: Checklist for a Successful Performance Appraisal Page 7**

### Your Turn to Coach

 **PARTICIPANT SURVEY (Last page)**

 **TOOL: 51 Revealing Interview Questions**  
Available at [www.brecherassociates.com](http://www.brecherassociates.com) (Click on Resources & Free Tools)

### Educational Resources for Performance Management

- *Coaching for Performance: Growing People, Performance and Purpose*, by John Whitmore
- *Action Coaching: How to Leverage Individual Performance for Company Success*, by David L. Dotlich and Peter C. Cairo
- *Coaching for Leadership: How the World's Greatest Coaches Help Leaders Learn*, by Marshall Goldsmith, Laurence Lyons, and Alyssa Freas, EDS.
- **To share knowledge, innovations, and support from groups, create a Mastermind Alliance to achieve your goals:**  
— *Profit from the Power of Many: How to Use Mastermind Teams to Create Success*, by Natalie D. Brecher, CPM. Order through [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) or [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com)

"If I had eight hours to fell a tree, I'd spend four hours sharpening my ax."  
~ Abraham Lincoln



## 9 Secrets to Making Criticism Productive and Effective

<b>Step</b>	<b>Questions to Ask</b>
1. Before you begin, make sure your intent is to help them, focusing your attention on a “win-win” solution.	How can this conflict result in a win/win?
2. Start the conversation (in private) indicating your positive intent.	Would you join me for a minute? I’d like to get your take on what happened/the results of your work. Or, Let’s chat for a while. I’d like to discuss how we can improve the results of your work.
3. Explain the unacceptable behavior in clear terms with specific examples. What is the problem— <i>exactly</i> ? Do not personalize the criticism; address performance only.	What do you think of the work you did? How do you think that went? What did you think worked best? Least?
4. Impact/Effect: Describe the consequences of the behavior (how it affects the offender, the company, the results of the work).	How do you think that affects XYZ?
5. Suggest Desired Outcome: State how the behavior should change; describe what the acceptable behavior is.	What do you think the results would be if they were to be considered successful?
6. Describe the benefits of that change—to him and to the group.	How would you benefit if the work was completed in that way?
7. Request feedback: ask what the individual thinks about what has been said. Make this a two-way discussion.	What would you like to add to this conversation? What do you think about this?
8. Express the belief that he can change—that you expect a positive result.	The one non-question: I know you can turn this around; you’ve demonstrated improvement before.
9. Jointly discuss what can be accomplished to change the behavior and set a deadline. Ask him what he can do. Ask what the company can do to support him in making the change.	How can we rectify this? What would you do differently? How can we make this change? What dates would you like to set as a deadline and when we should discuss this again?

### Tips for Delivering Constructive Criticism

When providing constructive criticism, use these tips to express your thoughts so you create a non-defensive atmosphere.

- The language used should not be "global" in nature: words such as “always” and “never.” Saying, "You are always late," is probably not true. Instead, use a specific example, such as, "You were 30 minutes late this morning."
- Use "I" talk, not "you" talk. This means taking responsibility for the viewpoint you are expressing, e.g., "I feel you are not taking this seriously," versus "You are not taking this seriously."
- Use passive versus active voice. Instead of, "You wrote that report poorly," say, "The report was written poorly."
- Be willing to say you are wrong. If information is presented about an unknown point or perspective you have not considered, saying you are wrong and changing the focus of the conversation will prove the most beneficial.



## 14 Factors to Evaluate a Performance Appraisal for Legal Considerations

### 1. Are the factors I am appraising directly related to the job?

To ensure an objective appraisal, and one the courts will support, performance should only be judged on those Primary Elements (a.k.a. competencies, essential job functions) that apply to the position.

### 2. Did I inflate the rating?

An unwarranted positive review can undermine a company's future argument regarding an under-performing employee who is terminated for performance problems. By not covering performance deficits or inflating ratings to spare feelings, managers are actually exposing the company and themselves to great liability.

### 3. Did I deflate the rating?

An unfairly critical review can demoralize an employee. In addition, if performance was verifiably better than as evaluated, the employee may have grounds for complaint.

### 4. Did I note whether the employee achieved any of the goals set in the previous evaluation?

### 5. If the evaluation is significantly different (better or worse) than previous evaluations (especially the most recent), do I have substantial evidence of the current ratings?

An employer who argues termination for performance problems may weaken its explanation of nondiscriminatory conduct if the documented reviews for the employee indicate only positive comments prior to the termination.

### 6. Is the evaluation consistent and fair in comparison to the evaluations I have given/will give other employees?

Consistent and equitable treatment is a strong defense for accusations of discrimination and unfair management practices.

### 7. Did I include meaningful comments as well as checking the boxes?

Comments can support or deflate ratings.

### 8. Are my comments consistent with the checked ratings?

If not, which will the employee (and the courts) believe to be true? Ensure your ratings are congruent with your comments.

### 9. Do my comments constructively address the problem, indicating how performance can be improved?

An employee must be given the opportunity, with both resources and time, to correct performance. If not, the courts may not look favorably on the employer, unless the under-performance or behavior warrants immediate action.

### 10. Are my comments too general (vague) or too specific (petty)?

### 11. Did I focus on the employee's conduct, not the employee's intent?

### 12. Did I focus on the employee's knowledge, skills, and behavior instead of the employee?

### 13. Did I remember the primary purpose of performance evaluations – to improve performance and productivity?

For true performance improvement, providing praise and criticism alone will not be effective.

### 14. Am I allowing the employee time to discuss the evaluation?

An employer cannot assume that its employee has fully understood a performance review without allowing an opportunity for discussion of the review.

***As with any practices that have potential for liability,  
review all employee policies with your Human Resources Department and a labor law attorney.***



## Checklist for a Successful Performance Appraisal

- Review Performance Records to use as a reference point: The job's Primary Elements, Job Description, Performance Planning Results, communications from coaching, previous appraisals, etc.
- Compare actual performance with the standards/expectations.
- Involve the employee from the beginning of the process.
- Maintain a two-way conversation.
- Incorporate 360-degree feedback.
- Set aside friendship, sympathy, and personal animosity.
- Avoid subjective comments and generalizations.
- Be factual and as accurate as possible; honest, yet sensitive.
- Point out improvements needed more than mistakes. Jointly discuss how those improvements can be made.
- Provide specific examples of performance or conduct.
- Allow sufficient time for the employee to discuss, provide feedback, and ask questions.
- Provide space for employee's written comments on the appraisal document. Have employee sign.
- Follow up on employee comments in a timely manner.
- Use simple, clear language: Do not use code or jargon and do not mince words.
- Allow periods of silence for the employee to think and respond.
- Be confident and comfortable: They will notice your discomfort.
- Do not be afraid of good news: If you have to fire a good performer someday, you will have a good reason why.
- Do not hide bad news: Afraid to hurt the employee's feelings, fear an argument, or just do not like to talk about someone's shortcomings? If the employee is underperforming, you owe it to the employee, his or her coworkers, the organization, and yourself to inform the employee.





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