Performance Review Criteria – Ask The Expert



You can't just reward or discipline employees based on the nuance of performance metrics and goals, so ensuring you pinpoint multiple insights to encourage employee growth and reward good work is important for high workplace morale.

QUESTION

Our office is updating our performance management systems and would like a performance review criterion for managers to enforce that involves the insights of "Meets Expectations", "Exceeds Expectations", and "Outstanding".

ANSWER

Here's a more detailed framework you could consider expanding to:

Outstanding

Consistency & Reliability: Consistently demonstrates excellence in all areas of work, with little to no oversight required. Anticipates needs and resolves potential issues proactively.

Initiative & Leadership: Frequently takes ownership of complex or high-impact projects beyond their role. Actively mentors, coaches, or elevates team performance.

Innovation & Problem-Solving: Regularly introduces improvements, creative solutions, or efficiencies that positively impact the organization.

Collaboration & Culture: Seen as a role model for organizational values; inspires others with positivity, resilience, and adaptability.

Exceeds Expectations

Consistency & Reliability: Performs all duties at a strong level, often going above the standard requirements. Occasionally anticipates needs and identifies opportunities for improvement.

Initiative & Leadership: Willingly takes on new or difficult tasks when needed;

contributes to team success beyond their own role.

Innovation & Problem-Solving: Suggests improvements and solutions, some of which are implemented with success.

Collaboration & Culture: Encourages teamwork and maintains a positive attitude, serving as a reliable support to peers and managers.

Meets Expectations (ME)

Consistency & Reliability: Completes assigned tasks on time and to an acceptable standard. Requires standard levels of guidance.

Initiative & Leadership: Takes responsibility for their own work but rarely steps outside defined responsibilities.

Innovation & Problem-Solving: Resolves issues within scope using established methods, but seldom introduces new approaches.

Collaboration & Culture: Works respectfully and cooperatively with colleagues, demonstrating alignment with core values.

EXPLANATION

Some organizations also add a “Needs Improvement” or “Developing” category for clarity at the lower end. This gives managers language to describe performance that is below expectations without having to misapply “Meets Expectations.”