

# Appraisals for Appraisees

## Getting the Most From Your Appraisal

The annual appraisal stirs up a mixture of emotions for many people; fear, uncertainty or even resentment but your appraisal offers you the opportunity to review your progress and plan your next career steps. Even if you feel that your organisation doesn't have the best appraisal system, you can still make it work for you. This practice note covers:

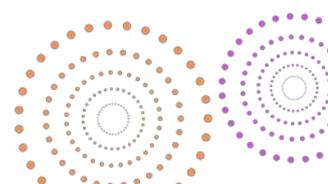
- Why appraisals matter
- Reflecting on your own performance
- Setting your career goals
- Personal Development Plans
- Understanding how you learn
- Giving feedback to your manager
- Receiving feedback

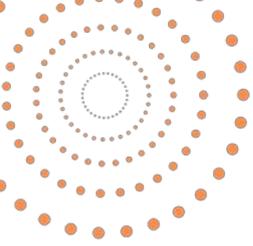
ROI	Return on Investment
PDP	Personal Development Plan

### Why Appraisals Matter

Appraisals are a time-consuming process so, from a business perspective, they should deliver a return on investment (ROI). When undertaken effectively the benefits from appraisals can include the following:

Benefits to Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees are properly trained and supervised</li> <li>• Employees are more likely to be more motivated and engaged</li> <li>• There will be consistent levels of service</li> <li>• Issues of unacceptable levels of customer care will be addressed</li> </ul>
Benefits to the Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have a clear idea of skills right across the organisation</li> <li>• Employees are more likely to be motivated</li> <li>• Individual learning and development needs will be addressed</li> <li>• They develop a reputation as an organisation that invests in and develops their staff</li> <li>• Lower staff turnover</li> </ul>
Benefits to Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater understanding of team strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Better understanding of team promotional goals</li> <li>• Improved trust because team know "where they stand"</li> <li>• Personal feedback gained from appraisees</li> </ul>
Benefits to You	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity to review your progress</li> <li>• Improved feedback on performance</li> <li>• Update personal development plans</li> <li>• A time to set yourself new goals and objectives</li> <li>• A chance to review where you fit within the team and organisation</li> <li>• Recognised for achievements</li> </ul>





## Reflecting on Your Own Performance

We are often the worst judges of our own performance, but an appraisal gives us the opportunity to review our successes and failures objectively and seek out feedback from others. Ideally you should be able to access your organisation's appraisal documentation to see what skills and behaviours they are looking for you to demonstrate; if that's the case then work through the documentation and complete all of the relevant areas. If you are unable to access the documentation use the appraisal preparation document which accompanies this practice note.

Whichever document you complete here are some key things to consider:

- Evidence - don't just say something like "I deliver excellent customer service", give an example of when you have delivered excellent customer service and, if possible, include anything additional to support your claim, perhaps a thank-you email.
- Past personal objectives – which did you achieve, where were these problems?
- Past team objectives – how did you contribute?
- Learning review – what have you learned from the past year's successes and/ or failures? What other learning have you undertaken during the year?

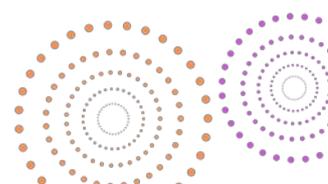
## Setting Future Goals

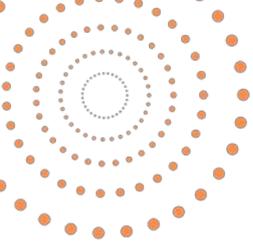
Rather than waiting to be told what's expected of you for the coming year, seize the initiative and set some of your own goals for discussion in the meeting.

- Review the corporate business plan if you are able to access it or, if not, take time to understand what the goals are for your organisation over the coming years – how could you help or contribute to those?
- What new challenges will your industry be facing over the next five years – what skills could you develop to support them?
- Have there been any issues or complaints within the team/ department which have highlighted gaps in your skills or experience?
- What are your own personal career goals and what are the next steps to achieving those?

Most people are already familiar with SMART goal setting; SMARTER goals simply ensure that progress is reviewed along the way:

<b>Specific</b>	Your goal must be clear and easily understood
<b>Measurable</b>	How will you know when you have achieved it?
<b>Achievable</b>	Is it something you can reasonably accomplish?
<b>Relevant</b>	Is it relevant to your career and/ or your organisation
<b>Time-bound</b>	When does it need to be completed by?
<b>Evaluated</b>	Dates should be set to evaluate progress against objectives
<b>Reviewed</b>	During the year objectives should be reviewed to assess their continued relevance and, where appropriate, updated and/ or amended





Another thing to consider when setting goals is to use positive language. How many of us have said things like “I will stop eating chocolate” only for all of our waking moments to be consumed by thoughts of chocolate until we eventually cave in and guiltily wolf down a Mars bar?

When setting business goals in appraisals avoid goals such as “I will stop avoiding the monthly networking meeting” and instead set a goal along the lines of “By March I will attend a networking skills workshop and begin attending the monthly networking meetings.”

### Personal Development Plan

A series of goals are pretty meaningless without a plan for how you will achieve them. For example, “I will lose one stone over the next three months” may be a very SMART goal, but there’s no mention of how the weight loss will occur: Additional exercise? Change of diet? Latest fad? It’s the same with business and career goals, we need to give some thought to how we will achieve the goals we are setting ourselves and what additional help and support we may require along the way.

A personal development plan (PDP) will enable you to plan and prioritise how you intend to achieve your goals. Specifically, we need to consider:

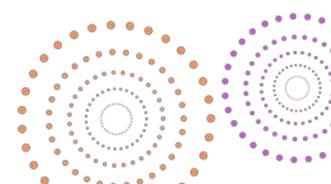
Development area	Broadly what skills do you need to develop?	Example: I need to improve my customer care skills
Specific skills?	Which skills in particular?	Example: I need to be better able to handle challenging customers.
Priority	How much of a priority is this?	1: Urgent 2: Within next 3 months 3: Within next 6 months
Method	How will you develop these skills?	Example: By attending a training course
Additional support required	What other help will you require?	Example: I will also access the internal coaching programme and read recommended books on the subject
To be completed by	When does it need to be done by?	Set a realistic completion date
Done	Check!	

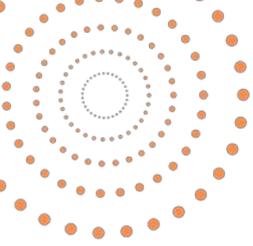
Please use the PDP template provided here to help you.

### Understanding How You Learn

When putting together your personal development plant don’t set yourself up to fail; we all prefer to learn in different ways so be sure you play to your strengths whenever you can. In their book *The Manual of Learning Styles* (Peter Honey Publications, 1992), Peter Honey & Alan Mumford identified 4 broad “Learning Styles”

- Activists: Learn best by doing, getting stuck in, having a go and learning from their mistakes
- Pragmatists: Learn best when the learning is focused on real life situations and practical applications





- Theorists: Learn best from books, papers and journals and enjoy a logical and structured approach
- Reflectors: Learn best from watching others or reviewing learning activities at a later date

There are a variety of online assessment tools available should you wish to formally assess your style, but you probably already know whether or not you prefer a training course with discussions and role plays to reading a book on the subject. Many of us have a varied approach to how we learn but if, for example, you hate attending training courses then list other methods of learning when putting together your PDP and you'll be much more likely to achieve your goals.

### Giving Feedback to Your Manager

Not all managers offer this opportunity but for those that do it can be pretty intimidating in an appraisal to quickly think about what to say, and how to say it appropriately, without bringing your career to a sudden and abrupt halt.

Whether giving positive feedback or improvement feedback it's important to ensure it is detailed, objective and honest and, whichever sort of feedback you're giving, the AID model will help:

**Action:** What are they doing, or not doing, which is great/ causing a problem

**Impact:** Why is it great/ causing a problem

**Desire:** Where could they do it more/ what would you like to see instead

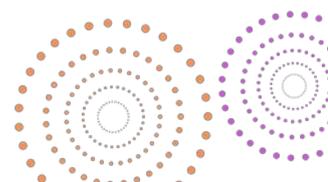
	Positive example	Improvement example
<b>Action</b>	When you take the time to say thank you for a piece of work I've done...	When you talk over people in meetings...
<b>Impact</b>	...it makes me feel like the effort was all worthwhile...	...it feels as if what we're saying isn't worthwhile...
<b>Desire</b>	...so it would be great if you could keep doing that!	...it would be great if you could let us finish what we're saying and then we can discuss it afterwards.

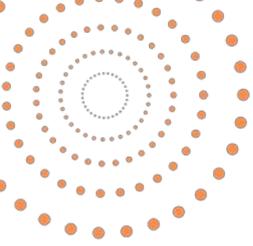
### Receiving Feedback

Firstly, if you're on the receiving end of positive feedback then take it. Many of us feel embarrassed and deflect it with a "oh, it was nothing" or "it was a team effort really." If you did something well then accept the accolades graciously: "Thank you, I worked really hard on that and it was great to see such a positive final result"

Being on the receiving end of improvement feedback is a different experience. Hopefully, if your manager is properly trained, there should be no surprises in an appraisal, but that's not always the case. Most of us would say that if we're not doing something properly then we'd like to be told about it – but we're rarely delighted when someone does.

In these situations, we can often become defensive rather than listening to and taking on board what is being said. If someone gives you a piece of improvement feedback during your appraisal, or at any other time:





1. Listen closely and carefully to what they're saying and ask questions to clarify.
2. Thank them – it's can often be difficult for others to raise
3. Chew on it – don't respond immediately, think it over for a day or so.
4. Don't take their word for it – bounce the feedback off a trusted friend or colleague.
5. Be self-aware and honest – if it's something you need to work on, then add it to your PDP and work on it.

