How to Evaluate Staff Performance Fairly and Accurately

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Performance Reviews 101

Two-part Webconference Series

**How to Evaluate Staff
Performance Fairly and Accurately**

Today: Tuesday, January 15
1pm EST

**How to Coach Staff Year-Round
(Not Just During Reviews)**

Tuesday, January 29
1pm EST
Register here

Not Easy to Rate Staff Performance Accurately

Representative Reasons Why Managers Don't Rate Staff Performance Accurately

"I don't want to be disliked for giving harsh ratings."

"Giving anything less than the top rating will disengage staff."

"If I give someone a low rating, I have to write up a PIP[1]."

"I have too many direct reports to spend a lot of time on each evaluation."

"I can't lose someone and be short-staffed during flu season."

"I don't want to have an awkward conversation about why someone got a low rating."

"My team is working hard. I want to give them the maximum merit increase."

"Everyone inflates ratings."

"I'll look like a bad manager if I have too many low ratings."

1) Performance Improvement Plan.

Accurate Ratings Support Three Goals

A+

Identify Top-Performing Team Members Across the Organization

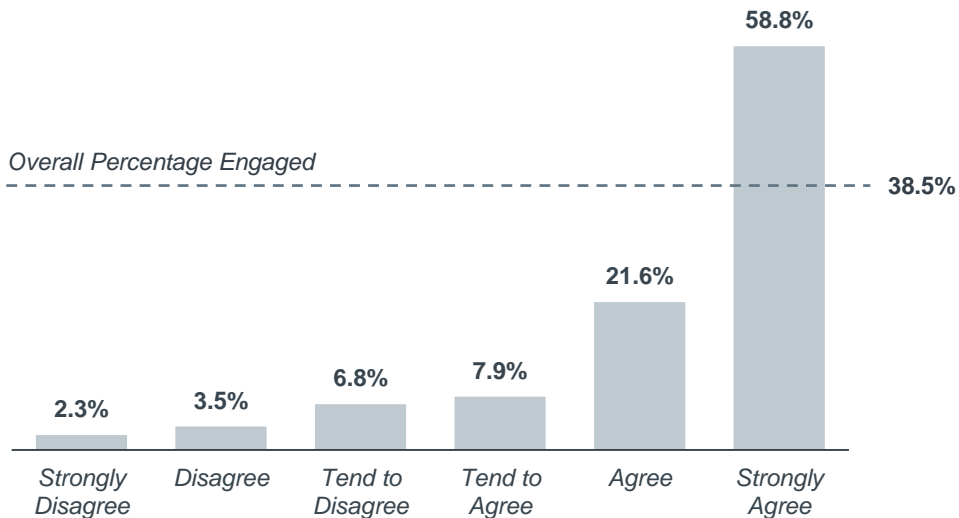**Provide Feedback and Support to Underperforming Team Members**

Link Rewards to Performance

Clear Expectations Boost Engagement

Percentage of Frontline Staff Engaged by Agreement with the Statement, "I Know What Is Required to Perform Well in My Job"
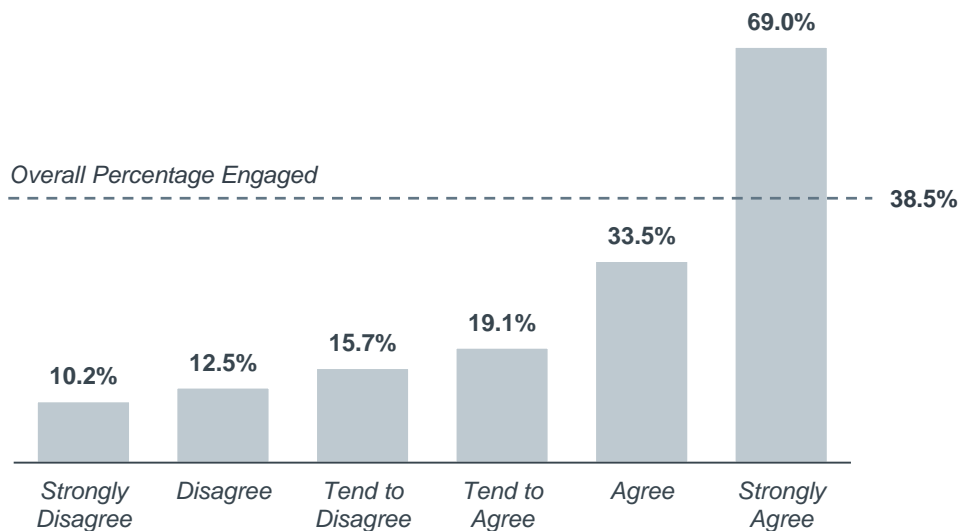
n=235,229

Overall Percentage Engaged — **38.5%**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Tend to Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2.3%	3.5%	6.8%	7.9%	21.6%	58.8%

Source: Advisory Board Survey Solutions' Employee Engagement National Database, 2014.
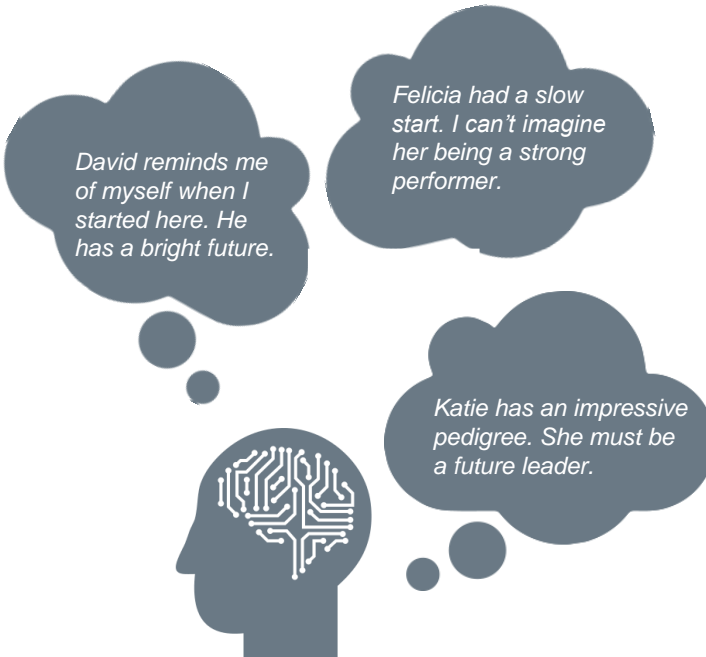
Important for Managers to Deliver Tough Messages

Percentage of Frontline Staff Engaged by Agreement with the Statement, "My Manager Communicates Messages That My Coworkers Need to Hear, Even When the Information Is Unpleasant"

n=235,229

Overall Percentage Engaged — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — 38.5%

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Tend to Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10.2%	12.5%	15.7%	19.1%	33.5%	69.0%

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Source: Advisory Board Survey Solutions' Employee Engagement National Database, 2014.

Unconscious Bias is an Unavoidable Reality

David reminds me of myself when I started here. He has a bright future.

Felicia had a slow start. I can't imagine her being a strong performer.

Katie has an impressive pedigree. She must be a future leader.

" We all have shortcuts, 'schemas' that help us make sense of the world. But our shortcuts sometimes make us misinterpret things. **That's unconscious bias**. "

National Center for Women & Information Technology

Biases to Look Out For When Evaluating Staff

Affinity Bias

- The tendency to view favorably others who are like us, and to hold unfavorable views of those who are unlike us.
- *"I'm not sure he has the cultural fit to be successful with other team members here."*

Halo/Horns Effect

- The tendency to view a person or group positively (halo) or negatively (horns) based on a single attribute or pre-existing like/dislike for that person or group.
- *"She thinks like me, and I like how she approached that project."*

Perception Bias

- The tendency to form assumptions or judgements about a group that make it impossible to objectively assess an individual of that group.
- *"She came from another unit with lower performance and it's clear she is also a low performer."*

Confirmation Bias

- The tendency to seek information that confirms existing beliefs or assumptions about a person or group.
- *"I'm not sure he should be promoted because he acts like a typical millennial and will probably leave soon anyhow."*

Tips for Interrupting Unconscious Bias When Evaluating Performance

1

Consider the **entire review period**.

Ensure you include evidence from across the entire review period.

2

Give **evidence**.

Give evidence to back up your rating and explain the decision you've made. If you comment on vague concepts like "cultural fit" or "executive presence," start with a clear definition and apply it uniformly.

3

Give the **benefit of the doubt** to all (or none).

Hold employees to the same standard. If you waive objective rules, do so consistently and transparently.

4

Imagine employees in **different social groups**.

Ask yourself if you would give the same rating and feedback if employees occupied different social roles. If your scores change, ask yourself why and adjust accordingly.

Take Notes Throughout the Year

Choose a System for Keeping Notes in One Place

Regularly Remind Yourself to Jot Down Notes

Systems to consider:
- Email folder per team member
- Excel file with tab per team member
- Word document

File quick notes when a <u>team member</u>:
- Displays a competency—or doesn't
- Receives feedback from a patient or family member
- Receives feedback from a colleague
- Provides an effective idea for process improvement
- Takes on a formal or informal role as a mentor to less-experienced staff
- Leads a project, committee, or taskforce

File quick notes when <u>you</u>:
- Give specific feedback to a team member
- Notice a pattern (good or bad)

For each note:
Include the date and 2-3 sentences of details to jog your memory. The more you write along the way, the less you'll have to write at the end!

A Quick Way to "Gut-Check" Your Ratings

Color	Description
BLUE	**The Superstar Team Member** • Highly regarded by peers as an expert in the field; serves as a role model and stimulates teamwork • Highly productive, generates top-quality work, and strives for perfection • Continuously seeks innovative ways to improve systems and processes • **Consistently exceeds** both behavioral (or qualitative) performance standards and quantitative targets for goals
GREEN	**The Solid Performer** • Regarded as a valued performer with thorough job competency; serves as a reliable team player • Consistently generates expected quantity and quality of work • **Meets** expectations for behavioral (or qualitative) performance standards and meets quantitative targets for goals
RED	**The Team Member Who Is Underperforming** • Regarded as a low performer with job competencies below requirements • **Consistently falls short** of behavioral expectations and/or fails to meet quantitative targets or goals • Demonstrates inappropriate or disruptive behavior; has received formal discipline reports during the review period

Translating the Rating Scale

Recommended Crosswalk for Performance Ratings and Colors

Color	3-Point Scale Score	4-Point Scale Score	5-Point Scale Score
BLUE / **The Superstar Team Member**	3	4	5
GREEN / **The Solid Performer**	2	3 2	4 3
RED / **The Team Member Who Is Underperforming**	1	1	2 1

Note: The table above shows how the three most common performance rating scales map to the colors. (3-point scale where 1 = low and 3 = high; 4-point scale where 1 = low and 4 = high; and 5-point scale where 1 = low and 5 = high). You only need to pay attention to the column showing the scale your organization uses.

Questions to Consider for Team Members with the Highest Ratings

Does this person:

- ☐ Consistently surpass all behavioral expectations, and act as a true role model for others?
- ☐ Regularly produce the highest quality of work and continuously strive for improvement?
- ☐ Require minimal supervision, demonstrate independent critical thinking, and look well-positioned for swift advancement?

Do all three apply?

No
Consider lowering rating by one to two notches

Yes
Go with the highest rating

Questions to Consider for Team Members with the Lowest Ratings

Does this person:

☐ Consistently fall short of behavioral expectations?

☐ Require regular, excessive supervision and follow-up?

☐ Seem unlikely to improve behavior, skills, or knowledge even with additional training and attention?

Do at least two of three apply?

No
Consider rating one notch above lowest rating

Yes
Ensure you've given the lowest rating

Questions to Consider for Team Members Between Ratings

Does this person:

- ❑ More regularly perform at the higher rating level?
- ❑ Primarily have weak areas that are not critical, unsafe, or significantly problematic?
- ❑ Actively work on improving weaknesses and demonstrate not just progress, but early proficiency in these areas?

Do all three apply?	
No Go with the lower rating	**Yes** Go with the higher rating

FAQ:
How can I help my staff write helpful self-evaluations?

Give Guidance on What to Include

Aspects to Emphasize:

- Specific examples of how they've demonstrated each criteria, especially examples you may not know about

- Qualitative or quantitative evidence of their impact

Instill Accountability for Completing Self-Evals on Time

Options to Consider:

- Email team members who haven't submitted their evaluation

- Post names of people who have submitted their self-eval (update regularly)

- Post names of all team members and whether they've submitted or not

FAQ:
What if I have a large number of evals to complete?

Block time on your calendar
Decide if you'll work in several short blocks across the week or a couple of longer ones (and block your calendar accordingly).

Share your goal with your peers.
Spread the word about your personal goal. (Are you doing two a day? Five twice a week? Something else?).

Space out the "easy" and "hard" evals you have to write.
Not all reviews require equal effort—some are easier to write, and some can be challenging. Try to avoid having to do a bunch of challenging ones in a row.

Reward yourself for staying on track.
Give yourself credit for meeting your daily or weekly target and enjoy a small reward (a favorite TV episode? An extra walk outside?)

Remember what it's really about.
Remember the positive impact that clear feedback has on your team's engagement.

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