

# THE **APPRECIATIVE** PERFORMANCE REVIEW TOOLKIT

## **HELLO:**

This toolkit provides a guide for Performance Reviews that can be held 2-4 times annually with each employee.

This guide is for both employee and supervisor, and should be provided in advance to both parties so that they may reflect in preparation for their meeting.

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## About the Process

### WHY IT WORKS

The Appreciative Performance Review process has several aspects to it that make it different from regular performance reviews. Combined, these features serve to help employees feel empowered by the process and motivated to implement what was learned during the review. The relationship between employee and supervisor can become stronger, more trusting, and more genuine - all factors which promote high performance and positive affect.

### THE PROCESS

1. **Reflection.** Both supervisor and employee are encouraged to take time prior to their scheduled meeting in order to reflect upon the questions they know the other will ask them. They may wish to write some notes and bring them into the meeting.
2. **Scheduling the meeting.** It is up to the employee to schedule the meeting with the supervisor at a mutually convenient time.
3. **Meeting.** The first part of the meeting is comprised of a conversation guided by inquiry. The supervisor begins by asking the employee questions, using the Interview Guide Questionnaire. Then they switch.
  - a) **Inquiring with the Employee.** First the supervisor goes through the supervisor's interview guide questionnaire with the employee. The supervisor asks the questions, the employee answers.
  - b) **Inquiring with the Supervisor.** The employee and supervisor switch roles. The employee now asks the questions on their guide, and the supervisor answers. The focus is still on the performance and actions of the employee over the review period. The information gathered in section 2 (Dream – Imagining the future) of this interview will also inform the goal list.

**c) Adding Concrete Feedback.** Together, employee and supervisor work on the achievement feedback list. This list sheds light on employee's performance through comments, observations, customer and colleague feedback, etc.

**d) Collaborative Goal-setting.** The next step is to review the goal list together. The first part is to review the goals that had been set during the last interview (see below for suggestions if this is the first time you are engaging in this process). The achievement is rated on a three level scale (growth opportunity, meets goals, exceeds goals) and according action is determined. The other part is to formulate new goals for the future. The new goals that come out of the preceding interviews are recorded and refined here.

**e) Moving Forward.** The final step is to determine when the next review will take place and to sign the document.

## Recommendations for First Time Implementation

The following suggestions may help you in transitioning from your existing Performance Review system to this one:

- Employees may need time to adjust to this new way of engaging in performance reviews, and to be willing to take the associated risks. The process generates trust, but it also requires some trust, which can be daunting. It may be helpful to present the change to them in person and engage in conversation about it. For some employees, one-on-one may be more effective.
- One of the most striking differences with this performance review is that scheduling the timing of it is up to the employee, and in general they have more ownership over the process. This can take time to be felt and to be trusted. For some employees with very negative past experiences of performance reviews, avoidance may occur. Employers can help unblock this process by setting clear boundaries for this ownership: for example, although the day of the meeting is up to the employee, the year within which it takes place is not; although the employee is more empowered throughout the process, the process itself is still obligatory; etc. It can be helpful to have an initial conversation to clarify how power has shifted and how it has not by shifting to this new way of doing performance reviews.
- Do employees have goals that can be adapted to be integrated into *Collaborative Goal Setting* (reviewing previous goals) above? If so, this will enrich your first experience of Appreciative Performance Reviews. If not, it may help to acknowledge that this first experience does not contain the full cycle.
- The Appreciative Performance Review system requires significantly more time than traditional performance reviews. We think the time investment will pay off. This approach to performance reviews tends to have increasingly greater impact over time, as both parties become more comfortable with the process and format, employees increase their trust in the process, conversations become richer between employee and supervisor, and their relationship is strengthened.

## Overview of the Process

### BEFORE STARTING

If this is your first time implementing Appreciative Performance Reviews, read the *Tips for First Time Implementation* and discuss the process with everyone involved.

#### Step 1: Reflection & Scheduling

The **employee** initiates scheduling of meeting with supervisor within a specified time frame.

**Employee and supervisor** each prepare prior to the meeting by reflecting on the questions within the Toolkit. If this is not the first year of conducting AI Performance Reviews, be sure to review last year's *Goal List*.

#### Step 2: Meeting

**A:** The **supervisor** interviews the employee using the *Supervisor's Interview Guide* (p. 6).

**B:** The **employee** interviews the supervisor using the *Employee's Interview Guide* (p. 8).

**C:** **Together**, fill out the *Achievement Feedback List* (p. 10) to generate specific examples of performance. This can also be done throughout the year.

**D:** **Together**, create goals for the year using the *Goal List* (p. 11) and create a plan for future performance reviews using *Planning for the Future* (p. 12).

## Supervisor's Interview Guide

*Instructions:*

*Supervisor interviews the employee using the questions below and takes notes. Supervisor can ask probing or clarifying questions if appropriate.*

### **DISCOVERY (Reviewing the Past)**

Reflect on your job performance over the past year...

- As you think about your goals for last year, what accomplishments are you most proud of? What are you doing that works? Give yourself credit for even the little things you do that bring you a feeling of success or accomplishment.
  
- What factors contributed to these successes? What caused things to work out well? What has helped you to do your best work (for example your work team, co-workers, customers, certain policies, or the work environment)?
  
- How do your accomplishments benefit or enhance the lives of others?

## **DREAM (Imagining the Future)**

- To become even more successful in your work, what do you want to continue to do, do more of, do better, or do differently? Of all these possibilities, which are the ones you really want to focus on? (Remember to include this information in the goal list)
  
- As your supervisor, what would be the most important thing for me to do or say to support you in achieving your goals? What additional resources do you need to be successful this year? For example: training, job shadowing, coaching, equipment, materials, etc. (Remember to include this information in the goal list)

# Employee's Interview Guide

*Instructions:*

*Employee interviews the supervisor about their perceptions and experiences of the employee.  
Employee takes notes and can ask probing / clarifying questions if needed.*

## **DISCOVERY (Reviewing the Past)**

Reflect on my job performance over the past year...

- Considering all of my goals, what do you see as my most important accomplishments? What are you most proud of? What am I doing that works well? (After your supervisor's response, please review the status of each of last year's goals)
  
- What do you think contributed to my successes? What caused those things to work well for me? What has helped me to do my best work?
  
- What positive difference does my work make for you, my co-workers, clients, or others?



## **DREAM (Imagining the Future)**

- To help me be even more successful in my job/career, what do you want me to continue to do, do more of, do better, or do differently? Of all these possibilities, which are your priorities? (Remember to include this information in the goal list)
  
- What additional resources or support do you think would help me be successful this year? For example: training, job shadowing, coaching, equipment, materials, etc. (Remember to include this information in the goal list)

# Achievement Feedback List

## Instructions:

Supervisor and employee can brainstorm specific examples and incidents from the past review period of successful progress toward performance goals. Incidents may include comments, observations, customer feedback or any other performance-related information.

*Note: if undertaking regular AI Performance Reviews, it can be more effective to add to this sheet throughout the year as incidences arise.*

DATE	COMMENT/OBSERVATION	SOURCE

## Goal List

*Instructions:*

*This section is informed by the outcome of the interviews and should be filled out by going back to specific notes from the interviews. The goals should balance those that relate to personal learning and development and those that relate to organization-driven performance.*

### Rating Options

- Growth Opportunity (GO): Additional development needed to meet targeted results.
- Meets Goals (MG): Achieved the targeted results.
- Exceeds Goals (EG): Performed significantly above and beyond targeted results.

Individual Learning Goals	RTG	Organizational Performance Goals	RTG

# Planning for the Future

*Instructions:*

*The employee and supervisor have the opportunity to record a synopsis of this process, comment on the process itself, or highlight anything of special importance. A plan for the future is created.*

**Final Comments – Employee:**

**Final Comments – Supervisor:**

**Review Interval:**

*How often would you like to meet to talk about your performance and celebrate your accomplishments?*

Two times a year

Three times a year

Four times a year

**Signatures**

Supervisor:

Date:

Employee:

Date:

Mgr, Director,VP:

Date:

## About This Toolkit

This toolkit was created by Michael Krasser and Lise Palmer at [SPARK](#). We are involved in exciting projects to help organizations be healthy, effective, and vibrant.

This product was inspired by many resources on [The Appreciative Inquiry Commons](#) and informed by Appreciative Inquiry methodology.



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