

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

A NEW HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research project is to develop an improved Houston Police Department performance evaluation system including a modification of the current performance evaluation form that is being utilized. The process that I will recommend can be used to improve the current method of evaluating employees.

As a general practice, there is no current training afforded to Houston Police supervisors who regularly complete performance evaluations on their employees. Some supervisors have received limited training in performance evaluations, but there is no mandatory requirement. My research project can be used in the future to give some guidance to supervisors who do not know anything about the evaluation process. It will provide supervisors with information to assist them in accurately carrying out the process and correctly completing the evaluation forms.

The City of Houston Civil Service Commission provides supervisors with a 36 page book governing performance rating, reporting and grading of individual members of the fire and police departments. This civil service book provides one evaluation form that is to be used for all classified employees of both departments. The civil service book and

performance evaluation form were adopted on February 15, 1951. The performance evaluation form (see Appendix A) has not changed in the last 41 years and it does not accurately describe the job performance of either police officers or fire fighters. As a result, I believe current employee evaluations do not effectively measure actual job performance. Mixed signals are sent to employees who are expected to carry out one job but are graded on another. This results in confusion on behalf of the employee and the supervisor. The civil service book does not provide any type of instruction or guidance to supervisors who complete the evaluation forms and conduct the evaluation interviews.

The proposed performance evaluation system entails informing supervisors of objectives, purposes, legal issues, problems, pitfalls and rating errors involved in the performance evaluation process. Supervisors will also be given guidelines and instructions on how to properly conduct their performance evaluation interviews. This system will provide a better understanding of performance evaluations and serve as a reference tool during the evaluation process.

A performance evaluation system is only as good as the people who administer it. The better a supervisor understands the system and is familiar with the different components involved in the process, the better that supervisor will be in

participating in the evaluation process. This understanding will ensure that the results of the performance evaluation process will be accurate and useful to both the supervisor and the employee. It is believed that rater training programs offer the greatest potential for improving rater accuracy, although past rating programs may have been somewhat misdirected.¹ Training management and staff in the process of conducting performance appraisals and of being appraised is essential for an effective performance appraisal system.²

All performance evaluation systems should be simple and straightforward. There should be no mysteries or deceptions in the evaluation system. All participants should be fully informed of the purpose, content, and the results of the evaluation. Supervisors need to be thoroughly familiar with the evaluation system because performance evaluation is one of the most important duties assigned to a supervisor. It is the most important duty when one views efficient, accurate performance evaluation as the key to current successes and to future progress in the work place. The proper appraisal of employee job performance is essential for effective management of human resources in any organization.³

DEFINITION OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Patricia King describes performance evaluation as a system that defines the job and clearly communicates expectations between boss and subordinate. It is the process of identifying, measuring and developing human performance in organizations.⁴ Performance evaluation is a continuous process that has considerable carry-over from one encounter to another.

Robert Brown defines performance evaluation as the process of assessing and recording staff performance for the purpose of making judgments about staff that lead to decisions. Its primary purpose is to be used as a tool for staff development.⁵ Both authors agree that performance evaluations must be viewed as a process and a system. It must not be viewed as an end of the year event or as just a rating form that needs to be filled out. As an on-going process, performance evaluations should involve setting goals, providing resources, checking employee progress, making revisions and adjusting employee goals, and going through the entire cycle again for each rating period. As a system, performance evaluations should be a highly interactive set of connected parts. It should involve personnel at all levels in differing degrees in determining job expectations, writing job descriptions, selecting relevant appraisal criteria,

developing assessment tools and procedures, and collecting, interpreting, and reporting results.⁶

Performance evaluation is the process of comparing an individual's past performance with established standards so that organizational effectiveness can be improved and individual potential can be developed. Before useful evaluation can take place, the supervisor and the employee need to define and reach a mutual understanding of the performance standards to be achieved. It is very important that this understanding be reached at the beginning of the evaluation period so that the employee is fully aware of what is to be expected. Performance evaluations can be used as a tool to enable supervisors to do their job more efficiently. It is a very powerful tool that supervisors have for improving productivity, but it is also capable of stirring strong feelings and conflict in the work place if it is not conducted properly. Studies have shown that performance evaluations are more effective and employees are more satisfied with it if managers emphasize mutual problem solving and encourage employee participation.⁷

Employees should be evaluated on their actual performance of important tasks or critical situations as opposed to generalizations to global dimensions. Rather than just rate police officers on leadership, dependability, and cooperation,

supervisors should rate the officer on how well the officer handles specific crime scenes, criminal investigations, or other direct tasks associated with the officer's specific assignment. Police officers should be evaluated on their performance of important tasks, not on the extent to which raters think they may possess traits and dimensions that management believes are related to good performance.⁸

TRAINING

Training supervisors in the process of conducting performance evaluations is essential for a system to effectively operate. Research has demonstrated that training can improve the accuracy and reliability of ratings and reduce psychometric errors such as the leniency error and halo effect.⁹ It is also important to train supervisors on the rationale for the system and on the specific procedures for carrying out the actual evaluation interview. Training should stress that the supervisor should not be concerned with ranking employees, but rather with assessing individuals based on their job related performance. It should be emphasized that supervisor's rating are to be based on actual job performance and not on an overall impression of the person.¹⁰

To help improve the accuracy of the rating process, supervisors should have frequent contacts with their subordinates and should observe them while they are performing their duties. Supervisor training should include but not be limited to:

- o Objectives
- o Purposes
- o Legal Issues
- o Pitfalls and Rating Errors
- o Evaluation Interviews¹¹

OBJECTIVES OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Performance evaluations are intended to help supervisors and employees plan, evaluate, and if necessary to correct the employee's performance to ensure efficiency and productivity. A major objective should be to improve the productivity and overall job performance and satisfaction of the employee.

The evaluation process is intended to establish or enhance a relationship of trust, understanding, and cooperation between a supervisor and a subordinate. This relationship provides a feeling of security to the employee. They get this feeling from knowing what is expected of them and from having opportunities to discuss problems. It also satisfies another basic human need, the need for recognition.¹²

Employees want and need the satisfaction of knowing that they are performing well. The rewards of work increase when employees know their efforts are admired and appreciated. The overall objectives of any performance evaluation system should be to encourage several activities on the part of the employee and the employer. These activities should include:

- o Encouraging supervisors and employees to have face-to-face discussions.
- o Setting clear expectations for employees.
- o Identifying the key requirements of the job and to develop a mutual understanding of responsibilities at three levels: the employee being evaluated, the appraiser, and the appraisers superior.
- o Letting employees know how they are doing in terms of their job performance.
- o Enabling employees to see how they contribute to the police department's goals.
- o Developing employees for increased responsibilities.
- o Rewarding performance fairly.

- o Providing for the recognition of outstanding performance.
- o Identifying specific areas for employee improvement.
- o Gaining commitment and involvement from employees.
- o Identifying talent and evaluation of individual promotability.
- o Providing a flow of information about the performance and developmental needs of employees, to enhance future personnel decisions about job assignments, promotions, transfers, and terminations.
- o Evaluating an employee's performance as objectively as possible, against specified job goals.¹³

PURPOSES OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

All performance evaluation systems have one primary purpose and that is to improve employee performance. The evaluation procedure must not be a mere display of appreciation for good work done nor must it be strictly an opportunity to reprimand the employee for poor performance. Ideally, it is to serve as an opportunity to offer the employee advice and counsel regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the employee's performance.

According to Houston Police Department General Order #300-8, "Performance Evaluations," the Houston Police Department assesses, appraises and evaluates the performance of department employees and uses the evaluation process as one instrument for assessing departmental efficiency and effectiveness and planning departmental training needs.¹⁴

This General Order is rather vague and does not fully explain the multiple purposes of these evaluations. One of the most important purposes of any such system should be to encourage and maintain communication between the supervisor and the employee concerning such matters as assignments, responsibilities, and job effort. Communication is very critical and it is the key to achieving success. Through communication and observing the employee first hand, a supervisor is in the best position to determine training needs.

This leads to other evaluation purposes, such as personnel actions involving promotions, transfers, and separations. In order to manage human resources effectively, supervisors need to base their personnel recommendations on documented reliable sources of information. Accordingly, Valerie Stewart lists eight major purposes of appraisal systems. These various purposes are described as follows.¹⁵

FEEDBACK TO APPRAISER:

People do not improve on their results without feedback on their performance. Jobs vary in the extent to which they enable people to get accurate feedback. There are some jobs - mostly in service functions - where mistakes are easier to identify than successes. For some people, being deprived of feedback is a very stressful thing. Others may not give overt signs of minding very much, but they are still unlikely to learn. Performance appraisal systems help in at least two ways: first, by giving direct feedback from the manager to the employee and secondly by helping the employee to set up ways of monitoring his own performance.

MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES:

This is a system whereby the chief executive decides upon the objectives which the firm will try to attain, in the long term and then in the next year or so. Then he meets the managers who report to him, either in a group or individually and tells them his thoughts. When MBO works well, all the people in the organization share a common goal, and common commitment. Delegation is encouraged. Rivalries and duplication of effort are reduced. MBO assumes a formal sharing of objectives between manager and subordinate.

SALARY REVIEW:

At appraisal time the manager usually assigns an overall rating to the employee. Central salary planning functions find this rating useful to know, though there are organizations where salary grading is said to be a separate exercise. In fact, the link between performance appraisal and salary grading is controversial.

CAREER COUNSELLING:

The opportunity to talk about work plans for the next year or so opens up the option of talking more generally about the appraisee's career, his skills, his ambitions, and so on. Most people profit from a discussion about their training needs, needs they might have for new experiences or new skills to enable them to do their present job better and perhaps train for the next one.

SUCCESSION PLANNING:

At both the local and the central level there is a need to have available a list of people ready to take over in the event of a job becoming vacant. The appraisal system encourages managers to think about the abilities of their employees and to match these abilities with the known requirements of the job or jobs.

MAINTAINING EQUITY:

Most people have had experience of the situation where one man's unfavorable opinion of a subordinate has unfairly influenced the subordinate's progress. The element of measurement

implicit in most appraisal systems sometimes makes employees fearful that any such unfairness is about to become institutionalized. For this and other reasons many appraisal systems involve the appraising manager's manager in the appraisal process. He may have to sign off the appraisal form before the interview, afterwards, or both.

HAND-OVER BETWEEN MANAGERS:

A manager taking over a new team, or accepting a transfer from another part of the firm, is greatly helped by having records of his team's objectives, their past performance, and any special problems or ambitions they may have.

TO AVOID TROUBLE:

Legislation in the UK and overseas is making it more and more difficult to dismiss someone without being able to show records of their unsatisfactory performance over a period of time, together with evidence that the person concerned was given adequate warnings and chances to improve. It is also more likely that firms will have to justify their reasons for making a particular promotion decision, if someone passed over by that decision believes that unfair discrimination on the grounds of race or sex was being practiced.

All of these purposes are related and they attempt to achieve an evaluation system that is fair, effective, and one that improves morale and performance. The City of Houston Civil Service Commission Manual states that the main purpose of performance rating is to:

provide an impartial and systematically administered rating plan whereby supervisory judgments of employee performance are recorded regularly through appraisal of important characteristics or factors of performance by the individual employees.

The performance rating plan aids the supervisors in impartially evaluating the variable characteristics, aptitudes, and attitudes of the respective employees. By so doing, impartial determination of the relative performance and

service of employees is determined. Supervisors and employees alike realizing that such ratings are being determined on significant characteristics, are encouraged to self-analysis and improvement in performance.

The principal aims of the performance ratings are served by their continued use in maintaining sound personnel relationships between employees, supervisors and management.¹⁶

LEGAL ISSUES

Performance evaluations have been based largely on subjective ratings and personality traits, not on job-related criteria, so they have become the target of federal attention. Since performance appraisal systems are used to make decisions about promotions, salary, and transfers, they are considered a test and subject to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines. Although performance appraisal systems may not have to meet the rigid requirements held for personnel examinations, the courts expect such systems to be fair and accurate.¹⁷ The law requires that performance appraisal systems be valid. A system is considered valid if the company using it can demonstrate that the system accurately measures job-related performance criteria.¹⁸ If managers and supervisors are going to protect themselves and their organizations they need to know the law and how to keep performance appraisals productive and legal. The law requires that performance appraisals:

1. Use job-related and valid criteria.

2. Use forms and scales derived from a job analysis.
3. Not be biased against any person because of race, color, sex, religion, age, or nationality.
4. Standardized for all employees.
5. Be performed by persons who have knowledge of the person and the job.¹⁹

Most of the laws that apply to performance appraisals are frequently related to EEOC such as:

- o Equal Pay Act of 1963
- o Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- o The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
- o The Privacy Act of 1974²⁰

In order to conform with EEOC and other laws the following rules are recommended:

- o Document the reasons for all employment decisions both positive and negative.
- o Always base your appraisal on specific, clearly communicated job requirements.
- o Never appraise an employee if you are unfamiliar with the job requirements or if you have insufficient contact to make valid judgments.
- o Avoid making subjective appraisals of an employee's personal characteristics.
- o Never say anything in your appraisals about the employee's race, color, sex, handicap, national origin, or veterans status.
- o Base your appraisal on a number of observations not just isolated incidents.
- o Keep all appraisal records private.
- o Allow the employee to see and review the appraisal form.
- o Allow the employee to dispute or appeal the evaluation information.
- o Employees should be made aware of performance standards in advance.
- o Supervisors should make personnel decisions that are congruent with the evaluations.
- o Do not write negative documentation unless you can prove that the information is correct.
- o Avoid letting personal characteristics influence your evaluations.²¹

Maintaining a legal performance appraisal system demands vigilance in noting changes in official regulations and interpretations as well as day-to-day attention to the system's operation. Managers and supervisors need to:

- o Record all staffing decisions.
- o Have specific, written job requirements.
- o Share your appraisals only with the staff members and others who need to know.
- o Let the staff member see the appraisal report and provide an avenue for appeal.
- o Never say anything in a reference that you cannot support with specific documentation.
- o Avoid letting personal characteristics of staff members influence your appraisals.²²

PROBLEMS, PITFALLS, AND RATING ERRORS

There are numerous problems and difficulties associated with performance appraisals. Supervisors frequently complain about the time element involved in documenting performance, completing the evaluation forms, and conducting interviews with each and every employee. Some supervisors do not enjoy evaluating employees in a face-to-face environment. Others are often embarrassed or worried about the employee response to the evaluation if it is not very favorable.

Many managers view performance appraisal as a personnel department program. They feel that it's something they must do, but that it doesn't have a real payoff for them. Researchers in the field have found that only about one-fourth of the managers who have conducted performance appraisal meetings spent more than an hour in their discussions. It doesn't seem fair that a lot of managers short-change the process and then complain that it doesn't work.²³

Other supervisors see evaluation systems as something imposed on them by an outsider who is unfamiliar with their day-to-day problems. The general absence of supervisor training makes all of the above matters worse. Without valid training, supervisors will not understand the purpose or the system, and they will not complete the process properly. Robert Olson lists the following problems with many appraisals:

- o Unclear, confusing, and sometimes complex procedures.
- o An excessively time-consuming process.
- o Failure to give negative feedback.
- o Subjective, nonjob-related criteria.
- o Politically influenced.
- o Lack of skill in appraising.
- o Lack of preparation.
- o Lack of reliability (ratings not replicable across evaluators).
- o Lack of validity (ratings do not predict successful job performance).
- o Difficulty in weighing judgmental areas of performance.
- o Discomfort with involving subordinates in a two-way process.
- o Inability to handle disagreement or emotional reactions.²⁴

A rating error is defined as the difference between the judgment recorded on an evaluation form about a person's performance and an objective and accurate assessment of the person's actual performance. The error can be due to mistaken judgment, bias or prejudice, lack of information, or other extraneous influences.²⁵ Many rating errors are due to honest mistakes in judgment, and many supervisors are unaware they are doing anything wrong. It is essential that all supervisors completing performance evaluations be familiar

with the sources of errors and how to prevent them. Robert Brown describes the most common pitfalls or errors as:

- o Contrast Effect
- o Horn effect
- o Halo Effect
- o Recency Effect
- o Spillover Effect
- o Similar To Me Effect
- o Directional Biases²⁶

CONTRAST EFFECT:

The contrast effect is the tendency to evaluate a person relative to other individuals rather than relative to the job requirements. This is frequently influenced by the order in which individuals are rated. Rating an extremely poor performer first is likely to influence the ratings of the rest of the individuals. If you have just rated a super performer, the next person's performance will look quite modest by comparison, and even though his or her performance was average, you may have a tendency to rate it lower than you would otherwise. Do not let the last appraisal you completed influence your thinking on the next one.

HORN EFFECT:

The horn effect is rating a staff member low on all job performance dimensions because of one characteristic. A staff member who is continually late for staff meetings and always requires updating on what happened during the meeting could prompt a rater to give lower ratings on several other job performance dimensions just because he has become an annoyance.

HALO EFFECT:

The halo effect involves inappropriately generalizing from one aspect of a person's job performance to other aspects. It is rating the employee high on all job performance dimensions because of one characteristic. Halo's and horn's are the most frequently discussed rating errors.

RECENCY EFFECT:

The recency effect is letting the member's most recent behavior significantly influence a rating on

current behavior. Rating a staff member low at the end of a six-month rating period because he conducted a poor staff meeting last week is an example of a recency effect. You should not focus on the employee's recent performance while ignoring other performance that occurred over the entire rating period.

SPILOVER EFFECT:

The spillover effect is letting the member's past behavior significantly influence a rating on current behavior. Rating a staff member low because of an alcohol problem that happened a year ago is an example of a spillover effect. You need to put aside all past prejudices both good and bad and evaluate the employee on the specific rating period. Raters must ask themselves whether or not the behavior that is influencing the specific rating is representative of the staff member's job behavior for the full period that the rating is intended to cover.

SIMILAR TO ME EFFECT:

The similar to me effect is due to the natural tendency to like people who are similar--people who have similar interests, backgrounds, and goals. Knowing that a staff member shares your same interests often means that you believe he or she cannot be all bad. Having similar job strengths such as liking for details or for planning ahead can also influence performance ratings. You have to evaluate job performance when completing the rating forms and do not consider whether or not the person is like yourself.

DIRECTIONAL BIASES:

When raters demonstrate directional biases, they give similar ratings to all staff members, such as rating all near the middle (a central tendency), giving everyone low ratings (a negative tendency), or giving everyone high ratings (leniency). The central tendency pattern is common and represents an easy escape for the rater who does not wish to make appraisal judgments. The central tendency occurs when a supervisor rates all of the employees near the middle performance categories. It is the temptation to think of everyone as average. The supervisor bunches everyone up near the middle of the scale and is unwilling to use the extremes.

The leniency tendency is to mark everyone up higher than they actually deserve because the supervisor is afraid to harm their employee's future career or they are reluctant to discuss the employee's problems.²⁷

Most of the above pitfalls and errors can be avoided by taking a little time to consider each error and by objectively evaluating the employee. If you have a hard time being objective, try getting opinions from others who know the work of your employees. Other people probably already give you informal feedback on how your people are doing. Use this information to verify your own ratings.

EVALUATION INTERVIEW

In preparing for the interview, you need to select a proper time and place to conduct your interview. A private office or a place where you will not be disturbed is highly recommended. You need a place that will be free of distractions and where you and your employee will be able to concentrate.²⁸ Make sure that you give your employee advance notice of the scheduled evaluation interview. This gives the employee time to gather information or documentation relating to his work performance. It also allows the employee time to think of questions or problems that hamper his or her work output. Prior to the interview, make sure you (the supervisor) are well prepared and informed about the employee's past and

present performance. You have to do your homework to find out how each and every employee is performing. You will need to review the goals that were set for that specific rating period, review the employee's job description, check for documentation that may have been placed in the employee's personnel file, and check all productivity reports. You can also interview other co-workers and supervisors to see if they know anything about your employees that you may not have known. The supervisor should have the evaluation form fully completed prior to conducting the interview, except for the space reserved for employee comments. The supervisor should be thoroughly familiar with the evaluation forms and should not have to fumble with them during the interview period. There are three main objectives in evaluation meetings:

1. To learn what your employees think of their own performance and what their primary motivations are.
2. To give your own assessment of what employees have accomplished. To praise good performance so it will continue and to call attention to needs for improvement.
3. To plan for future good performance.²⁹

The supervisor should open the meeting by stating the goals and objectives of the performance evaluation interview. He/she should set the tone for the entire evaluation interview. Together, the supervisor and the employee should discuss each performance category. They should also discuss employee strengths, weaknesses and recommended areas of improvement. This evaluation interview provides the

opportunity for clarifying any differences in perceptions concerning the employee's work effort which cause the person to feel that the rating on a particular task statement may not accurately reflect actual performance.³⁰ The supervisor and the employee should also use this time to jointly set future goals. To achieve maximum effectiveness the goals should be specific, measurable and have time lines attached. Richard Olson provides some suggestions for improving the appraisal interview.

Listen. The effectiveness of an evaluation interview increases with your understanding of a subordinate's point of view. If you interrupt and dominate the conversation, you may miss an opportunity to find out what motivates your employee. Listening is much talked about, but a little practiced management skill. The more accurately you hear what subordinates say, the better your chance to help them perform more effectively.

Ask Open Questions. If our aim is to open up discussions, avoid asking binary, global, threatening, and cued questions. If a question can be answered "yes" or "no" (binary), it is probably a poor question. Most questions should be geared to finding out what employees think and getting employees to express their frustrations as well as their aspirations.

Speak of "We." Talk in terms of "we" rather than "I." This is more than a communication trick. It suggests that the manager and employee are together. In interdependency there is strength.

Spotlight the Job. Focus on responsibilities and goals rather than character traits.

Three suggestions:

(a) Avoid attributing poor performance to characteristics of the employee. Instead analyze the job and ways to work more effectively.

(b) Try to describe performance without interpreting it.

(c) Avoid generalities and cliches. Misunderstanding often occurs when two people interpret a word or phrase differently. You can circumvent this problem by clearly defining important words in job terms, and asking the employee to do the same.

End the Interview on a High. Build an image of potential rather than an image of doom (unless, of course, you plan to fire the subordinate). Improved job performance, not punishment, is your aim.³¹

METHODS OF MEASURING PERFORMANCE

There are a variety of different methods to measure performance. Everybody has a different perspective on how performance should be measured. Some performance evaluation systems are customized to meet the specific demands of the organization. Some of these methods have the potential of generating information that can be successfully used to provide feedback to employees, but do not generate information that can be used to make management decisions. Some methods provide information that can be used for making management decisions, but not for feedback. Still other methods provide information that can be used for both purposes. All varieties of performance evaluation systems have advantages and disadvantages.

All systems are subject to a variety of errors. Most organizations use a combination of different methods to provide measures of performance to meet their needs. There are four common categories of methods used by most organizations. The four categories are:

1. Narrative Summaries
2. Rating Scales
3. Checklists
4. Ranking Procedures³²

A narrative summary is written by the employee's immediate supervisor describing the employee's work history and duties during the specified rating period. The supervisor can document critical incidents, in paragraph form, that involve both successes and failures of the job.

A rating scale provides a list of measured traits that are considered characteristics of both good and bad performance. The supervisor makes a determination of where the employee fits on the rating scale and rates him/her accordingly.

There are two major types of checklists, "weighted" and "forced-choice." Weighted checklists describe specific employee behaviors. Supervisor's must distinguish where the behavior falls on a range between exceptional to unacceptable. Forced-choice checklists describe employee behavior with two statements that are favorable and two statements that are unfavorable. The supervisor checks off one statement that best describes the employee and one statement that least describes the employee.

The ranking methods entail making a list of employees with the most effective employee at the top and the least effective at the bottom. The supervisor can rank employees individually, according to work groups, or in random paired combinations.

TYPES OF EVALUATION

There are a variety of different types of evaluations that organizations can use. The evaluation system employed can be tailored to fit what the organization deems important.

Evaluations can be divided into four types:

1. Traits
2. Tasks
3. Goals
4. Job Behaviors³³

TRAITS:

The trait approach has been around for a long time. The form lists personal qualities for managers to rate, such as initiative, effort, dependability, leadership, analytical ability, judgment, creativity, attitude, maturity, critical thinking, enthusiasm, versatility, self-control, thoroughness, accuracy, and sincerity. These seem logical and are easy to embrace, but assessing them poses serious EEO considerations.

TASKS:

The task approach usually presents a list of typical functions--planning, organizing, producing, knowing the job, delegating, handling people, meeting deadlines, following through, and so on.

GOALS:

An increasingly popular method is based on goals (the results desired in a job). A goal form contains a section for setting goals and one for reviewing progress. Goals have the potential to be job specific.

JOB BEHAVIORS:

Job behavior criteria can take two forms: 1) open ended, essay-type descriptions and 2) predetermined job behaviors. In the former, a description of an

employee's performance is written out with work examples. In the latter, the criteria are preset, based on a job analysis.³⁴

Most organizations use a combination of the different types of evaluations. Through the use of different combinations of types and methods, an organization can get extremely specific and detailed on exactly what they want to measure and on what they want their evaluation system to accomplish.

included most of the same questions that the patrol officers answered combined with others directed to their supervisory role.

Among the most significant of these findings were:

- * 70% of the sergeants feel the present evaluation system assesses performance badly or not very well.
- * 47% of the sergeants did not receive any performance evaluation training.
- * 52% of the sergeants are not at all familiar with legal issues associated with completing performance evaluation forms.
- * 47% of the sergeants are not at all familiar with pitfalls and rating errors.
- * 76% of the sergeants would like to receive training or information to assist in completing evaluations.

After reviewing the surveys of both patrol officers and sergeants it seems evident that the Houston Police Department is not providing proper evaluation training and education to their employees. It also seems a valid conclusion that the performance evaluation system is not being effectively administered and is not serving the needs of the department to the extent that it could.

CONCLUSION

Performance evaluations can help determine how well an employee is progressing toward established objectives. They help identify those employees who are making the greatest contribution to the mission of the organization. A performance evaluation system also provides an opportunity for supervisors and employees to communicate both employee and departmental goals. In order for the performance evaluation system to be successful, supervisors need to fully comprehend the entire system. The best system will fail if the supervisors are not properly informed and trained. This paper proposes the departmental need for general information and training on the objectives, purposes, legal issues, problems, pitfalls, and rating errors, and finally the evaluation interview itself. If these training-based tasks could be accomplished numerous benefits could accrue to the department.

In the course of this study 14 different types of performance evaluation systems and performance evaluation forms were reviewed (see Appendix D). One police department (Bryan, Texas) does not use an evaluation system. They feel the evaluation process causes more harm than good. The majority of performance evaluation systems that I reviewed did not have any type of formal training or detailed instructions on how to correctly complete the process. All of the evaluation forms

were somewhat different from one another i.e., no two types or methods of performance evaluations were exactly the same (see Appendix E). Based upon studying numerous evaluation instruments, the form in Appendix F was developed and is recommended for use in the Houston Police Department. This new form uses a combination of different types and methods of evaluation to accurately describe behavior, traits, and actions taken by the officer.

The newly proposed form has 44 evaluation categories along with sections that detail firearms proficiency, training classes, commendations, internal affairs complaints, employee strengths and weaknesses, recommended training and career development, and employee comments. The categories listed are an accurate description of activities that police officers perform on a daily basis. The sections reserved for filling in details allows supervisors to fully describe the officers overall performance activities, both good and bad. This new performance evaluation form is simple, straightforward, easy to understand, and easy for the supervisor to complete. It is much more comprehensive than the current performance evaluation form that is being used by the Houston Police Department.

This newly proposed form should eliminate all the confusion concerning what is expected of an employee and what categories

are used to measure work activity. All the new categories are distinctly related to police duties and tasks. Evaluations can now be considered and accepted as valid among everyone involved in the process.

ENDNOTES

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APPENDIX A

Current Houston Police Department performance evaluation form.

City of Houston
Civil Service Commission

REPORT OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE RATING

37

For (Semi-annual period ending _____
(Probationary period ending _____
(Transfer or Termination
period ending _____

Name of Employee

☐ Supervisory or staff position

Title of Position

☐ Non-supervisory position

Department

Division - District - Station

FACTOR OR ELEMENT	CHECK APPLICABLE FACTOR DEGREE OF PERFORMANCE				
	UNSATIS. FACTORY	FAIR	SATIS. FACTORY	VERY GOOD	OUT. STANDING
(1) Quality of Work					
(2) Dependability and Adaptability					
(3) Initiative and Leadership					
(4) Safety Mindedness					
(5) Cooperation and Loyalty					

Suggestions for Improvement by Immediate Superior Officer:

Basis for "Unsatisfactory" or "Outstanding" Rating and Grade (see note below)

(Use other side if necessary)

Rated by _____
(Signature of Immediate Superior Officer) (Title) (Date)

Reviewed by _____
(Signature of Higher Superior Officer) (Title) (Date)

Approved by _____
Department Head Total Points Adjective
Rating

Report Furnished to Civil Service Commission _____ Date _____

Report Furnished to Employee _____ Date _____

Note: The basis and reason for each rating of "unsatisfactory" and "outstanding" for any member of the department will be given for each specific "unsatisfactory" or "outstanding" performance or behavior warranting such rating and

APPENDIX B

Survey of performance evaluations given to patrol officers of
the Houston Police Department's Central Patrol Division.

**Patrol Officer Survey
of
Performance Evaluation**

The general purpose of this survey is to determine if the current performance evaluation system is working the way it is intended to work. The survey will be used to assess the understanding and effectiveness of the current system.

Patrol Officer Survey
of
Performance Evaluations

1. Age: Years
21-30 _____ (place an X on appropriate line)
31-40 _____
41-50 _____
51-60 _____

2. Length of service: Years
0- 5 _____
6-10 _____
11-15 _____
16-20 _____
21-25 _____
25+ _____

3. The frequency of discussions with your supervisor concerning your career development is:
Sufficient for you _____
Insufficient for you _____
Discussions never take place _____

4. Discussions with your supervisor about your career training takes place:
More than twice a year _____
Twice a year _____
Once a year _____
Less than once a year _____

5. Do you think that some form of performance evaluation system is:
Very necessary _____
Useful but not essential _____
Of limited value _____
Completely useless _____

6. Do you think that performance evaluations are:
Too frequent _____
Frequent enough _____
Not frequent enough _____

7. Does the present evaluation system in use assess performance:
Badly _____
Not very well _____
Fairly well _____
Very well _____
8. Do you like the evaluation form that is currently being used:
No, not at all _____
It could be better _____
Yes, it is fine _____
9. Does the current evaluation form accurately describe your work performance activities:
Definitely not _____
Some what _____
Yes, very definitely _____
10. Do you regard the format of evaluation forms as:
Very relevant and useful _____
Helpful to a degree _____
Of little value _____
Completely useless _____
11. How would you describe the current evaluation system as a management tool for improving performance:
Very effective _____
Fairly useful _____
Not much help _____
Useless _____
12. Does the present evaluation system create motivation to improve your performance:
Definitely not _____
Some what _____
Yes, very definitely _____
13. How long does your evaluation interview with your supervisor last:
More that 1 hour _____
30 minutes to 1 hour _____
15 to 30 minutes _____
less than 15 minutes _____

14. During evaluation interviews, has your supervisor advised you of ways to improve your performance:
Often _____
Sometimes _____
Never _____
15. When your evaluation interview takes place, would you say that it is:
Not very open and constructive _____
Reasonably open and constructive _____
Very open and constructive _____
16. Do you feel that the interviews are conducted properly:
Hardly ever _____
Most of the time _____
All of the time _____
17. Do you fully understand the current evaluation rating system:
Definitely not _____
Some what _____
Yes, definitely _____
18. Do you believe your supervisor fully understands the evaluation rating system:
Definitely not _____
Some what _____
Yes, definitely _____
19. Please offer your own thoughts, views, and suggestions about career planning, training opportunities, and the current performance evaluation system:
-
-
-
-
-

APPENDIX C

Survey of performance evaluations given to sergeants of the
Houston Police Department's Central Patrol Division.

**Sergeant Survey
of
Performance Evaluations**

The general purpose of this survey is to determine if the current performance evaluation system is working the way it is intended to work. The survey will be used to assess the understanding and effectiveness of the current system.

Sergeant Survey
of
Performance Evaluations

1. Age: Years
21-30 _____ (place an X on appropriate line)
31-40 _____
41-50 _____
51-60 _____
2. Length of service: Years
0- 5 _____
6-10 _____
11-15 _____
16-20 _____
21-25 _____
25+ _____
3. The frequency of discussions with your supervisor concerning your career development is:
Sufficient for you _____
Insufficient for you _____
Discussions never take place _____
4. Discussions with your supervisor about your career training takes place:
More than twice a year _____
Twice a year _____
Once a year _____
Less than once a year _____
5. Do you think that some form of performance evaluation system is:
Very necessary _____
Useful but not essential _____
Of limited value _____
Completely useless _____
6. Do you think that performance evaluations are:
Too frequent _____
Frequent enough _____
Not frequent enough _____

7. Does the present evaluation system in use assess performance:
Badly _____
Not very well _____
Fairly well _____
Very well _____
8. Do you like the evaluation form that is currently being used:
No, not at all _____
It could be better _____
Yes, it is fine _____
9. Does the current evaluation form accurately describe your subordinates work performance activities:
Definitely not _____
Some what _____
Yes, very definitely _____
10. Do you regard the format of evaluation forms as:
Very relevant and useful _____
Helpful to a degree _____
Of little value _____
Completely useless _____
11. How would you describe the current evaluation system as a management tool for improving performance:
Very effective _____
Fairly useful _____
Not much help _____
Useless _____
12. Does the present evaluation system create motivation to improve your subordinates performance:
Definitely not _____
Some what _____
Yes, very definitely _____
13. How long does your evaluation interview with your subordinate last:
More than 1 hour _____
30 minutes to 1 hour _____
15 to 30 minutes _____
less than 15 minutes _____

14. During evaluation interviews, have you advised your subordinate of ways to improve their performance:
Often _____
Sometimes _____
Never _____
15. When your evaluation interview takes place, would you say that it is:
Not very open and constructive _____
Reasonably open and constructive _____
Very open and constructive _____
16. Do you feel that the interviews are conducted properly:
Hardly ever _____
Most of the time _____
All of the time _____
17. Do you fully understand the current evaluation rating system:
Definitely not _____
Some what _____
Yes, definitely _____
18. Do you believe your subordinates fully understands the evaluation rating system:
Definitely not _____
Some what _____
Yes, definitely _____
19. Are you fully aware of the purposes of performance evaluations:
Definitely not _____
Some what _____
Yes, definitely _____
20. How much training have you received on performance evaluations:
8 hours _____
4 hours _____
less than 4 hours _____
none at all _____

21. Are you familiar with the objectives of performance evaluations:
Yes, very familiar _____
Some what familiar _____
Not at all familiar _____
22. Are you familiar with the legal issues involved with completing performance evaluations:
Yes, very familiar _____
Some what familiar _____
Not at all familiar _____
23. Are you familiar with the pitfalls and rating errors of performance evaluations:
Yes, very familiar _____
Some what familiar _____
Not at all familiar _____
24. Would you like to receive training or information to assist you on completing your performance evaluations:
Yes _____
No _____
25. Please offer your thoughts, views, and suggestions about career planning, training opportunities, and the current performance evaluation system:

APPENDIX D

Police departments and agencies that contributed performance evaluation instruments to the project.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEMS AND FORMS REVIEWED

Alvin, Texas Community College Police Department

Amarillo, Texas Airport Police Department

Bryan, Texas Police Department

Comal County, Texas Sheriff's Department

General Dynamics

Houston, Texas Police Department

Kingsville, Texas Police Department

Las Vegas, Nevada Police Department

New York City, New York Police Department

Nueces County, Texas Juvenile Probation Department

Seattle, Washington Police Department

State of Texas Department of Public Safety

United States Air Force

Wichita Falls, Texas Police Department

APPENDIX E

Comparison of 14 different performance evaluation systems and forms.

COMPARISON OF SYSTEMS AND FORMS

	NUMBER OF CATEGORIES	SUPERVISOR TRAINING	METHODS	TYPES	SPECIFIC JOB RELATED CRITERIA
ALVIN	7	NO	NS,RS,CL	TR,TA,GO,JB	NO
AMARILLO	17	NO	NS,RS,CL	TR,TA	YES
BRYAN	NO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM OR FORM				NO
COMAL COUNTY	19	NO	RS,CL	TR,TA,GO,JB	NO
GENERAL DYNAMICS	14	NO	RS,CL,RP	TR,TA,GO,JB	YES
HOUSTON	5	NO	RS,CL	TR	NO
KINGSVILLE	9	NO	NS,RS,CL	TR,JB	NO
LAS VEGAS	14	YES	NS,RS,CL	GO,JB	YES
NEW YORK	27	NO	RS,CL	TR,TA	YES
NUECES COUNTY	11	NO	RS,CL	TR,TA	YES
SEATTLE	12	YES	RS,CL	TR,TA,JB	YES
TEXAS DPS	69	YES	RS,CL	TR,TA	YES
U.S. AIR FORCE	6	YES	NS	TR,TA,GO,JB	YES
WICHITA FALLS	13	NO	RS,CL	TR,TA,JB	YES

METHODS

NS - NARRATIVE SUMMARIES
 RS - RATING SCALES
 CL - CHECKLISTS
 RP - RANKING PROCEDURES

TYPES

TR - TRAITS
 TA - TASKS
 GO - GOALS
 JB - JOB BEHAVIORS

APPENDIX F

Newly developed and proposed Houston Police Department
performance evaluation form.

City of Houston
Houston Police Department
Performance Evaluation Form

54

Name _____

Rank _____ Current Assignment _____

Employee number _____ Class number _____

Evaluation Period _____ To _____

Performance Criteria

- (O) Outstanding - The performance exhibited is exceptional and rarely equalled. The officers work is consistently excellent as to quality, thoroughness, accuracy, tactical, and technical expertise. The officers work exceeds all of the performance expectations of the department. Exemplary overall performance deserving special recognition normally occurring in less than 5% of the workforce.
- (E) Exceeds Expectations- The performance exhibited regularly exceeds basic requirements. The officer displays an advanced ability to apply skills and tactics to various responsibilities. The officers work meets the requirements described, in addition, exceeds some of the requirements. Performance exceeding the supervisor's expectation on nearly all performance factors.
- (M) Meets Expectations - The performance exhibited is acceptable. The officer performs work beyond minimum requirements. The officers work is acceptable and meets the performance expectations of the department. Performance generally meeting supervisor's expectation on most performance criteria.
- (B) Below Expectations - The performance exhibited is marginal. There is a limited ability to perform the appropriate skills for a given responsibility. The officer's work in this element is deficient and does not meet the performance expectation of the department. Erratic performance falling short of that expected on one or more performance criteria.
- (U) Unsatisfactory - The performance exhibited is poor. There is an almost complete lack of skill in being able to perform basic responsibilities. The officer requires repeated instructions with extensive directions. Totally unacceptable performance.
- (NA) Not Applicable - Evaluation of the factor or criterion is inappropriate for the employee being rated.

EVALUATION CATEGORIES

1. Accident Investigation	O	E	M	B	U	NA
2. Ability To Get Things Done/Meets Deadlines..	O	E	M	B	U	NA
3. Acceptance Of Criticism	O	E	M	B	U	NA
4. Appearance	O	E	M	B	U	NA
4. Attendance/Punctuality	O	E	M	B	U	NA
5. Attitude Toward Other Officers	O	E	M	B	U	NA
6. Attitude Toward Police Work	O	E	M	B	U	NA
7. Attitude Toward Public	O	E	M	B	U	NA
8. Attitude Toward Supervisors	O	E	M	B	U	NA
9. Community Interaction/Public Contacts	O	E	M	B	U	NA
10. Compliance With Rules	O	E	M	B	U	NA
11. Computer Operation	O	E	M	B	U	NA
12. Conflict Resolution	O	E	M	B	U	NA
13. Control Of Prisoner/Mental Patients	O	E	M	B	U	NA
14. Cooperation With Others	O	E	M	B	U	NA
15. Creativity/Innovation	O	E	M	B	U	NA
16. Criminal Investigation	O	E	M	B	U	NA
17. Decisiveness	O	E	M	B	U	NA
18. Dependability and Adaptability	O	E	M	B	U	NA
19. Driving Skill/Vehicle Operation	O	E	M	B	U	NA
20. Execution Of The Evidentiary Process	O	E	M	B	U	NA
21. Interpersonal Relations	O	E	M	B	U	NA
22. Knowledge Of City Ordinances.....	O	E	M	B	U	NA

23. Knowledge Of Department Policies & Procedures..	O	E	M	B	U	NA
24. Knowledge of Motor Vehicle Code	O	E	M	B	U	NA
25. Knowledge of Penal Code	O	E	M	B	U	NA
26. Leadership Skills	O	E	M	B	U	NA
27. Loyalty	O	E	M	B	U	NA
28. Managing Calls For Service	O	E	M	B	U	NA
29. Managing Information	O	E	M	B	U	NA
30. Oral Communication	O	E	M	B	U	NA
31. Organizational Ability	O	E	M	B	U	NA
32. Performs Under Stress	O	E	M	B	U	NA
33. Planning Ability	O	E	M	B	U	NA
34. Problem Identification Ability	O	E	M	B	U	NA
35. Problem Solving Ability	O	E	M	B	U	NA
36. Professional Demeanor	O	E	M	B	U	NA
37. Physical Fitness/Health	O	E	M	B	U	NA
38. Quality Of Work	O	E	M	B	U	NA
39. Radio Communication	O	E	M	B	U	NA
40. Report Writing	O	E	M	B	U	NA
41. Routine Forms Proficiency	O	E	M	B	U	NA
42. Safety Awareness	O	E	M	B	U	NA
43. Search And/Or Seizures	O	E	M	B	U	NA
44. Self Initiated Field Activities	O	E	M	B	U	NA

Firearms Proficiency

57

Qualification Score: _____

Type of Performance Medal: Marksman _____
 Sharpshooter _____
 Expert _____
 Distinguished Expert _____

In-Service Training Classes Attended

COURSE: HOURS: DATE:

Commendations and Awards

Internal Affairs Complaints and Dispositions

Employee Strengths/Weaknesses

Training Recommended For Improvement

Career Development Recommendations

Employee Comments

I have discussed this evaluation with my supervisor. _____
Employee Date

I have discussed this evaluation with the employee.

Supervisor Conducting Appraisal Date

Reviewed by: _____
Shift Commander

Reviewed By: _____
Division Commander