



Communication Audit: Performance Appraisal Reports

Center for Business Communication
<http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/hajduk/CBC-Home.html>
 Audit #2003a-C311 • Revised July 7, 2009

Name: _____ Topic: _____ Rater: _____

A. Plan for Each Individual Performance Appraisal Report

1. Plan & prepare useful feedback for the person (review notes, evaluation forms, records, etc.)	0 1 2 3 4
2. Create a writing plan that follows a logical, goal-oriented sequence.....	0 1 2 3 4
3. Tailor report goals/objectives to the individual employee--avoid the rubber stamp approach	0 1 2 3 4
4. Prepare specific comments, avoiding boilerplate like "to improve your overall performance"	0 1 2 3 4

B. Provide Useful Content

5. Make the report's specific purpose and objectives clear at the beginning of the report.....	0 1 2 3 4
6. Include and discuss concrete examples of the person's strengths.....	0 1 2 3 4
7. Include and discuss concrete examples of the person's weaknesses.....	0 1 2 3 4
8. Provide compelling support for each claim & specific case to support your ratings/evals..	0 1 2 3 4
9. Offer proposals and steps that will allow the person to perform more competently.....	0 1 2 3 4
10. Detail future plans, responsibilities, implementation, deliverables, actions, etc.....	0 1 2 3 4
11. Summarize the report's major points, decisions, agreements, etc.....	0 1 2 3 4
12. Close by asking person to take the specific action you desire--tell them what you want....	0 1 2 3 4

C. Create a Supportive Tone

13. Start and end the report on positive notes, creating more positive primacy & recency effect	0 1 2 3 4
14. Make person feel he/she is taken seriously & you're truly concerned about his/her needs	0 1 2 3 4
15. Discuss both the person's strengths and weaknesses (but always end on a positive note)	0 1 2 3 4
16. Stress the future & focus comments on helping the person with suggestions for success.....	0 1 2 3 4
17. Criticize performance, but not the person.....	0 1 2 3 4
18. Soften your tone when criticizing.....	0 1 2 3 4
19. Avoid generalizations & exaggerations ("You're always late." "Your work's never on time.")	0 1 2 3 4

D. Create an Effective Writing Style

20. Delete words, phrases, and sentences that don't add anything to your message.....	0 1 2 3
21. Write using the active voice, containing an actor or agency as the subject of the sentence	0 1 2 3
22. Write sentences using strong action-oriented verbs (avoid weak verbs like "is, was, are")	0 1 2 3
23. Use the inclusive "you/your/our" writing attitude to create a person-to-person style.....	0 1 2 3
24. Check the mechanics--use standard American grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation...	0 1 2

E. Use a Clean Layout & Design

25. Select a readable-sized serif font to slow eye movement & increase comprehension.....	0 1 2
26. Write sentences using 6-20 words to allow readers to parse & store ideas rapidly in STM	0 1 2
27. Use paragraphs w/ 2-6 sentences to allow readers to parse & store ideas rapidly in LTM	0 1 2
28. Use single spacing between lines in paragraphs & skip a space between your paragraphs	0 1 2
29. Make margins 3/4" - 1" wide & right margin ragged or unjustified to reduce eye strain.....	0 1 2

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