



Timely Information for Personal Success

Annual Performance Reviews: RIP

By Mike Jacquart

In today's go-go, "gotta have it now," 24/7 society, the concept of making an employee wait an entire year for a performance review makes no sense ... if it ever did.

In my experiences, one boss "got it," but the others did not. In some cases, employers call in employees as pretty much just a "checklist" of something required by HR, but that's about all it is. The annual review *could be* something useful, instead it's just another job to get out of the way.

❖ **The do-nothings.** Some employers do not conduct annual performance reviews. Ever. With this type of boss it can often seem as though the reason is, they are happy with your work ... and so, why bother with a review? Sounds great, right? To some extent, yes. The problem is, you may not have much of an inkling what they think you could be doing better, and so professional development is sorely lacking. If you're happy with the status quo, this is the perfect boss for you! But if you want to learn more, forget it – it's not likely to happen.

❖ **The ambushers.** In other instances, bosses are what I'll refer to kindly as "ambushers." Like the masked men in the Old West who rode in seemingly out of nowhere to hold up a stage coach, you don't know how you stand with this type of employer until he or she calls you in for your review. Being given a litany of things you're doing poorly on the

job takes you by surprise. Shock might be a better word. "What?" you think. "Gee, couldn't 'Phil' have let me know sooner if he was so disappointed with my work?"

❖ **Use teachable moments.** This brings us to the last type, the only ones who really "get" how to conduct an annual performance review ... that is, don't make them *annual!* Good bosses know how to conduct constructive criticism throughout the year, and don't wait to tell you everything in one big, single meeting. Like good teachers, good bosses use

continued on Page 2





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Healthy Recipe: Baked Sweet Potatoes

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 medium sweet potatoes (or yams), scrubbed clean

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Calories per serving: 130
- Protein: 2 g.
- Carbohydrates: 33 g.
- Sodium: 45 mg.
- Saturated fat: 0 g.
- Fat: 0 g.
- Fiber: 4 g.



DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ➋ Prick the skin of the potatoes with a fork in several places to prevent them from bursting.
- ➌ Place the potatoes in a warm oven to bake for 45 to 60 minutes, until tender.

Serving size: 1 potato.

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Questions and Answers

When a Colleague is LOUD

Q: *I manage a call center, and I have a salesperson who does a great job, but Steve talks so loudly that his colleagues can barely do their jobs. I don't want to isolate Steve in a different area if I can avoid it. What can I do?*

A: You're right in that removing him from his normal work area would serve more to "punish" Steve, but obviously you have his team members to consider as well. Does your team work in cubicles? You might want to purchase some sound-deadening material, and wrap it around his work area. Of course, Steve could try harder to talk a little less loudly, too! ■

Annual Performance Reviews: RIP

continued from Page 1

"teachable moments" to tactfully, calmly, tell an employee about something he/she did wrong ... and then, here's the kicker: tell you what NOT to do the next time!

Brief example: I once had a pretty good temper on the job, and thought I had an awfully good reason for swearing at my computer when I lost my story on a Friday afternoon. Only this was REALLY poor timing, as the production manager was bringing a customer through the newsroom about the same time. Needless to say I didn't set a very good example!

My editor cordially called me aside and told me the next time I should go into the bathroom, hit the wall, and let out my frustrations there before returning to work. Do you think I would have remembered this lesson months later in a formal review? I doubt it. We still had annual performance reviews, but it was mostly to go over one's progress, there were no big surprises.

In my nearly 30 years as a journalist, this was the ONE boss I had who "got it right." ONE.

So there you have it... since so few bosses know how to conduct an annual performance review correctly... let's do away with them already. ■

Mike Jacquart is the editor of "Employee Assistance Report," the "Journal of Employee Assistance" and a frequent blogger and LinkedIn contributor.

