

HRWS TRENDING



BATEMAN,
GORDON &
SANDS, INC.
INSURANCE

JULY 2019

IN THIS ISSUE:

Performance Evaluation Biases & What to Do About Them

You Missed the Last HR Clinic?

"Understanding Employee Status Changes and their Impact on Benefits"

Email Us with Subject Line: "Please Send June 2019 HR Clinic"

support@hrworkplaceservices.com

HRWorkplaceServices.com

866.691.7757

16679 N. 90th Street Suite 100
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260

HRWS
HR WORKPLACE SERVICES

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION BIASES & WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

Over the last month, we've seen a dramatic spike in calls, emails and myHRWS Portal searches regarding annual performance reviews. As you would expect, many companies are looking for best practices and helpful tools to improve their processes and results.

The timing is not atypical as many organizations go through this process mid-year. Even if your most recent review period has passed, a common thread among virtually every company is that the next review period will soon appear again on the horizon.

Many questions we deal with have to do with what can or cannot be said, how to document properly, etc. As we have these discussions, the topic of bias and how it can impact the evaluation process, often emerges.

If bias of any kind is present, it can quickly unravel the very essence of why reviews are conducted in the first place – to develop your people, set goals and ultimately strengthen your organization, top to bottom.

Let's review some of the most prevalent *biases* that can impact performance evaluations:

▶ **Appraisal** – Since roles and responsibilities can vary, it is important to utilize a form that closely aligns with the job functions of an individual. Taking a one-form-fits-all approach to performance

evaluations can greatly undermine the process and ultimately, its results.

- ▶ **Recency** – Take the case of a model employee who goes through a rough patch a month or two prior to review time. Maybe something personal is going on, or a new project just didn't click. At review time, their manager focuses on recent events, excluding some very strong work delivered in previous months – thereby not providing an accurate reflection of the employee's overall performance.
- ▶ **Intentional** – A review based on perception (i.e. personality conflict, rumors), rather than facts, can often lead to inaccurate conclusions – unfair to both the employee and the company itself.

Identifying evaluation biases and solving for them are two different issues.

While it certainly helps to consider some of the trappings and pitfalls that can compromise the employee evaluation process – sometimes the solution(s) are not so clean cut. However, there are a few measures one can take to greatly reduce the impact of bias and improve upon the review process as a whole. Here are a few suggestions from the HRWS Advisory Team:

- ▶ **Stakeholder insights** – Rather than keeping the review solely between supervisor and employee, gather input from some peers and leaders who regularly interact with the employee. A broader sample size inherently helps to avoid the impact of many biases.

- ▶ **Benchmarking** – Establish and implement consistent rating scales across the organization. If two managers use arbitrary methods to grade performance, the company never really gains a better understanding of its human capital.
- ▶ **Custom forms** – Take the time to ensure that the performance evaluation forms are sensibly aligned to the employees' roles and functions. One-size-fits-all models are often lacking.

reviews go beyond rewarding achievers, but give an organization a chance to recalibrate, set goals and identify future leaders and doers.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your organization's employee evaluation process, your dedicated HRWS Advisory Team is here to help. Additionally, you can find sample evaluation forms on the myHRWS Portal.

Performance evaluations, at their most basic, are opportunities to coach, teach and identify how a company can leverage its internal talent. Thorough

INTERESTING QUESTIONS RECENTLY ASKED OF HRWS ADVISORY STAFF

Q: What are the most important things to know about progressive discipline?

A: For starters, progressive discipline refers to the process of applying increasingly serious forms of employee discipline in order to address poor performance or misconduct.

This approach promotes consistency by providing a structured roadmap for both the supervisors and employees in disciplinary situations. Typically, employee discipline evolves from a verbal warning as the first step in the process to termination of employment as a last step. That said, depending on the severity of the situation, things may have to be escalated more quickly.

In unionized workplaces, employees typically have additional labor rights than we typically find in at-will employment relations. Of course, we recommend reaching out to HRWS to provide guidance through challenging situations.





Q: Do former employees have a right to access, copy or distribute information from their personnel records?

A: It depends. Employees may have the right, under certain circumstances, to inspect, copy or dispute the information in their personnel records. However, the specific requirements regarding employee access to records, including possible restrictions on copying or disputing information, vary by state. Some states explicitly grant a right of access to former employees. Most states' laws, however, address current employees. For specific situations, contact your HRWS Advisory Team.

Q: Are employers ever legally obligated to conduct an internal investigation?

A: **Yes.** When employers are notified of potential discrimination in the workplace, both federal and state anti-discrimination laws require employers to act toward correcting the discrimination promptly. Further, health and safety laws like the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) require employers to address allegations of unsafe or unlawful practices in the workplace. Employers in the transportation industry face requirements to drug test drivers in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and Department of Transportation Testing Regulations. Finally, employers in the financial industry are required to conduct background screening of certain employees, to comply with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, and to conduct investigations when employees “blow the whistle” on illegal or wasteful practices that could affect the stock market, investor accounts or shareholders.

Q: How does succession planning connect to other employer HR processes and programs?

A: A comprehensive succession planning process effectively integrates a number of existing HR initiatives, including:

- ▶ Talent assessment and acquisition
- ▶ Performance management
- ▶ Personnel development
- ▶ Career pathing

Ultimately, conclusions about an individual's status throughout these processes and programs, serve to provide input about how to compensate and reward succession candidates. Finally, not all succession candidates will choose to remain with the employer, so a feedback loop through comprehensive exit interviews becomes important.