

## Using Evaluations to Train and Manage Staff

Wouldn't it be most helpful to you and the rest of your team if the next person you hired expected to keep learning and getting constructive feedback? Imagine, no more tense moments when you ask them to talk with you about their performance on a project or to schedule an evaluation.

It's not too hard to set up; just evaluate all new staff multiple times during their first year. You and they will both get a chance to practice exchanging feedback and make it a standard operating procedure.

In their interview explain briefly that they will be expected to have regular discussions with you about how they are doing and what additional support they need. Let them know that you understand they will perform better if they know exactly what is expected, if they are given straightforward feedback and are given an opportunity to request what they need to grow into the best team member they can be.

This puts them on notice that they will be monitored and that they will be supported.

Now, on the first day of their employment give them a schedule of meetings with their supervisor. It will give a time and date of:

- A brief meeting at the end of each day the first week
- A meeting at the end of each week the first month
- A meeting the end of each month the first quarter (also the end of their probationary period?)
- A meeting at six months
- A "formal" evaluation at the end of their first year

Make the first four meetings about a half an hour long. Set aside an hour for the first end-of-the-week meeting. The first week is critical; your investment in them is fairly modest. If they show a serious deficiency you need to let them clearly know and consider walking away and not investing good time in a doubtful employee.

Cover three things in each of your meetings:

- A review of strengths you've noticed and things you've appreciated
- Areas that you'd like to see them focus their learning on, including skills development, use of organization systems, communication approaches, team relations, etc.
- "What can we do to help you be more effective and efficient?"

We'll talk more next time about this, but even these basics can get you off to a better start with a new hire. If you're under pressure to deal with a tough or defensive employee right away,

contact me and we can help you figure out how to clear the air and save a reasonable employee, or let a difficult one go without rancor.