COACHING FOR SERVICE AND SUCCESS:

A GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT GUIDE #2

Coaching for Service and Success: A Guide To Performance Feedback

The Library Development Guide #2

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The Library Development Guide Series

DISCLAIMER

This guide provides general information on performance feedback for public libraries in Ontario. It is not intended to be a replacement for professional legal or other advice and should not be relied upon for such advice.

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1. COACHING FOR SERVICE AND SUCCESS

1.1. The Purpose of this Guide

This is a guide to performance appraisal and employee feedback. It has been developed in response to requests from supervisors in small- and medium-sized libraries served by the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) area, who have identified a need for resource material, information, and training on providing effective performance feedback. Since ongoing performance feedback is integral to the entire process of performance appraisal, the complete process of performance appraisal is addressed in this manual. ***Coaching for Service and Success*** is intended to be a 'tool kit' or 'desk manual' for supervisors to consult for suggestions and ideas on:

- how to create an environment for employee and organizational success;
- how to help staff members achieve at a high level;
- how to ensure that supervisory expectations and library performance standards are met.

Sometimes, libraries and other organizations implement performance appraisal to control, warn, or even punish employees who have been labeled "problems". While performance appraisal is, indeed, a mechanism for addressing ongoing performance concerns, such concerns are best identified within a framework. The framework includes steps such as establishing norms, clarifying expectations, addressing employee training needs, and other factors which can influence employee achievement.

1.2. Who is this Guide for?

While this guide is intended for CEO's responsible for monitoring and assuring the quality of staff performance in small- and medium-sized libraries in Ontario, any library supervisor may find it useful.

Small- and medium-sized libraries in Ontario vary in their governance. Some are constituted under a single municipality, others are not. The varied frameworks for the governance and delivery of public library service include:

- Union public library boards
- County public library boards
- First Nations program administrators, library committees or band councils

This variety in governance has two implications for the readers of this guide. The first is in language, because all governance variations cannot be accounted for. Instead, the guide uses the terms, "library board" or "board" to apply to all governance systems. Secondly, the person responsible for performance appraisal is usually referred to as the CEO or the supervisor, despite the variety of possible titles, including, chief librarian, director, or manager, for example.

We ask that you, the reader, take your particular situation into account, adapting the information to the circumstances in your own library. No guide can speak precisely to your own workplace arrangements.

1.3. The Purpose of Performance Appraisal

The goal of performance appraisal is success for both the employee and the library in its community.

CEOs in public libraries have responsibilities, delegated by their library boards, for assuring smooth functioning library operations and quality service to their communities. Peter Drucker describes these supervisory responsibilities as assuring the efficiency and the effectiveness of the work. For Drucker, efficiency is doing things right, while effectiveness is doing the right thing.

One of the most useful tools you as a supervisor have to assure efficiency and effectiveness is open, two-way communication with, and among, your staff. Performance appraisal with coaching and feedback enables information sharing between you and your staff members. Through performance feedback, you and your employees can discuss mutual job expectations and future opportunities which can benefit you both, as well as benefiting the library.

The performance appraisal process benefits the library by providing regular, systematic evaluations of the staff member's work. The appraisal process benefits you, the supervisor, by incorporating ongoing opportunities to coach, recognize achievement and address any performance concerns which may be unresolved. The appraisal process benefits your employees by providing opportunities to identify and discuss any problems they may be encountering, get their supervisor's feedback, and have input on the coming year's work.

Used effectively, the performance appraisal unifies the work of the library and motivates the work of the staff.

1.4. The Legal Context [1] for Performance Appraisal

The areas of supervision and employee relations involve the law more than any other area of public library management. Moreover, as the CEO of a small library system, you are responsible for ensuring that the library as employer complies with relevant legislation.

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1 This section on law and legislation applies in its entirety to municipal public libraries. It does not apply as completely to First Nation public libraries and the degree of application may vary. First Nation CEOs may wish to consider the legal requirements of municipal libraries as possibly relevant background for alternate handling of similar ethical issues. You should consult with your community administration for details.

Three relevant statutes, all provincial, are noted here, with brief notes signifying their relevance to supervision and employee relations. This is not intended as a full briefing, but only as an overview. You are advised to get copies of each of these statutes and read them through. This isn't intended to make you a law expert, but simply someone who knows when the law needs to be considered. Your heightened awareness will also make you realize when you need to seek legal advice.

It is essential that all supervisory practices comply with legislation, and that there is documentation to prove that a fair and just process has been followed.

1.4.1.　　Employment Standards Act

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/00e41_e.htm

This is Ontario's basic labour legislation on terms of employment and it governs many of the conditions of work for all library employees. As the CEO, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are fulfilling all of the employer requirements of the legislation and are not asking staff to do anything that contravenes the **Employment Standards Act**.

Additional information on specific subjects covered is available at the Ministry of Labour website (http://gov.on.ca/LAB/english/es/guide/), along with an extensive guide in PDF format.

1.4.2.　　Human Rights Code

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBlaws/Statutes/English/90h19_e.htm

Section 5(1) of the **Ontario Human Rights Code** guarantees that "every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status or disability."

It is incumbent upon you, as CEO, to guarantee this right for all employees, and to ensure fair and equal treatment, guarding against any form of discrimination.

1.4.3. Pay Equity Act

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90p07_e.htm

This statute requires municipal libraries to establish plans to accomplish pay equity for female job classes and then to maintain pay equity in accordance with the job evaluation process used in the plan. Pay Equity is achieved by developing a grid that measures the nature and level of responsibility of each position, according to a pre-determined set of factors used across the board to measure all positions in the library. In the assigning and monitoring of responsibilities, it is important to ensure that no staff is being assigned or expected to perform responsibilities at a level higher than his or her position has been assessed.

Ontario's Pay Equity Office provides a website of useful information at http://www.gov.on.ca/LAB/pec/peo/english/index.html.

1.4.4. Unionized Workplaces

If your employees are members of a union, it is your responsibility to know their collective agreement. It is part of the legal framework in which you manage library staff. It does not prevent you from developing and implementing a performance appraisal process, but you do need to ensure that the process does not conflict with the collective agreement or work to include agreement on a review process into the contract.

1.5. Overcoming Our Reluctance

1.5.1. "I hate performance appraisals!"

There is no doubt that the annual performance appraisal can be an emotionally charged process for both the supervisor and the employee. Supervisors may make statements in what they believe are the best interests of improving employee performance, and find suddenly that they are under attack. Staff can feel that all of their good work over the past year has gone unrecognized, and that they have been attacked personally. Both the supervisor and the employee may feel vulnerable: uncomfortable judging, uncomfortable being judged.

For both partners, staff and supervisor, it is important to choose an appraisal method which places the employee's work in a context which neutralizes emotion and defensive behaviour by focusing on objective standards of performance that are closely related to the library's goals and objectives.

1.5.2. "I want to be fair"

Negative criticism is de-motivating and divisive. Critical judgements do not change behaviour, but leave people feeling picked on and treated unfairly. Negative criticism says more about the appraiser's likes and dislikes than about the employee's actions. It leaves the employee not knowing what to do or how to change in order to meet the supervisor's expectations.

Immediate, specific, sincere and consistent praise reinforces appropriate behaviours and helps staff learn from their experience. It allows staff to feel that their efforts are recognized. Praise allows supervisors to say thank you to staff for doing a good job, to let them know they have met certain expectations, and to show them how their work has contributed to the library's success.

For both partners, staff and supervisor, it is important to choose an appraisal method which supports fair and equitable treatment, which recognizes and validates achievement, and which places performance problems in a context that encourages cooperation and willingness to improve.

1.5.3. "I feel like things are out of control"

All organizations (whether societies, communities, or libraries), are always in a state of change. Change may be imposed from the outside, the rapid spread of automated systems, for example, or change may be internal, such as a staff retirement. How well the library recognizes, manages and learns from change, is a measure of its success. Healthy libraries weather change by adapting, becoming better and stronger; healthy libraries have staff who are flexible and resilient, who see problems as opportunities for growth and learning.

For both partners, staff members and supervisor, it is important to choose an appraisal method which allows both staff members and the library within its community to manage change, to adapt, grow and learn.

1.5.4. "I'm too busy"

Managing the day- to-day, getting-through-the-week's work, can be a challenge in increasingly busy libraries. When supervisors and staff are feeling overwhelmed, adding what may appear to be another administrative layer to the workload does not seem sensible.

While implementing performance appraisal does require an initial investment in time, the investment is spread over a number of years. In industrial psychology, there is a growing body of research which demonstrates that the rewards to organizations in time and productivity are well worth the initial investment.

For both partners, staff and supervisor, it is important to choose an appraisal method which increases staff efficiency and independence by providing a clear framework for solving problems, and enabling decisions that are in the best interests of the library.

1.5.5.   "Maybe the problem will go away"

Henry Kissinger once said, "Competing pressures tempt one to believe that an issue deferred is a problem solved; more often it is a crisis invented".[2]

Every library has problems. For the most part, staff and supervisors become adept at babying cantankerous patrons and equipment, tracking down important items missing from the collection, covering for staff illnesses or emergencies, and so on. Because there are no quick fixes for persistent behavioural problems, supervisors may be tempted to work around the problem, despite ongoing complaints from co-workers and the public.

For both partners, staff and supervisor, it is important to choose an appraisal method which looks at the performance of the library system overall, as well as at how individual behaviours affect the smooth functioning of the library. Choose an appraisal method which provides opportunities for learning new behaviours within a context which demonstrates how library operations are improved.

1.5.6.   "It's not my job"

All employees come to the workplace with needs that are individual and relevant to the particular circumstances of their lives. Some employees seem to be working just for the pay cheque, or the benefits, or the social environment. Few employees enjoy jobs in which they can take little pride in their work, or where they feel isolated from their workplace colleagues and the mainstream developments of the library.

By aligning expectations, and by finding the fit between what the employee and the supervisor want to achieve in the workplace, staff can enjoy personal success and benefit the library at the same time.

For both partners, staff and supervisor, it is important to choose an appraisal method which motivates, which builds commitment and cooperation, and which ensures employee and supervisory agreement on reasonable expectations.

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2 Henry Kissinger as quoted in Steinke, Peter. *Healthy Congregations*, p. 41.

1.5.7. "We can do it!"

Consider athletic jargon:

> Go for the gold!
> Keep your eyes on the prize!
> Canada wins!

Winners get through their daily training, injuries, stresses and strains, by focusing on a larger goal, a vision of success, a sense of purpose. In libraries that are service-driven, staff members strive to meet a patron's individual needs and call on all of the resources available to them to satisfy these needs. They understand that meeting each patron's individual needs is the day-to-day effort that allows the library to be a winner in its community, to achieve its sense of purpose, and its vision. This sense of purpose gives context to, and validates, the work of each staff member, and gives staff a shared sense of achievement.

For both partners, staff and supervisor, it is important to choose an appraisal method which allows everyone to contribute to achieving an agreed upon sense of purpose, a vision of success which aligns and unifies the work of the library and the staff.

1.6. Goals and Objectives as Steps to Success

The guru of workplace psychology, Harold Leavitt says:

> "Develop methods that tie performance appraisal to [the
> employee's personal] growth and learning objectives, so that we
> are not simply evaluating people as good or bad, but are rather
> trying to point out problem areas and paths to their solution." [3]

There are numerous appraisal methodologies, ranging from commercial products, to systems developed in-house. Some systems are founded in psychological assessments, some in detailed analysis of job components with complex mathematical rankings. Some are as simple as the supervisor's recorded impressions and opinion of the employee's work. No one appraisal system, however, can resolve all employee/supervisor relationship problems.

The evaluation method used most commonly at this time is the negotiation of annual goals and objectives. In fact, there is such universal recognition of the motivational and developmental benefits to the organization and to the employee of a goals and objectives-based appraisal methodology that organizations are starting to use terms such as "employee learning plan" to describe the annual appraisal.

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3 Leavitt, Harold J. *Managerial Psychology*. p. 185

Setting agreed to goals and objectives is a method that is based on ongoing supervisor/employee feedback. It attends not only to the day-to-day effort, but also to bringing about strategic change by determining individual goals and objectives that move the library forward. It is a method that aligns the organization, it shows staff that through their efforts and cooperation, their work contributes to overall library success.

Goals and objectives focus on the future, giving context to the everyday. This future focus enables positive change and helps the library and staff to adapt flexibly. Today's challenges become tomorrow's opportunities for learning and growth.

The purpose of a goals and objectives based appraisal system is success for each individual employee and for the library in its community. It achieves this purpose by focusing on both behaviour and achievement.

1.6.1.   How a 'Goals and Objectives Based Appraisal System' Works

This type of appraisal system works best when built on a framework that clearly depicts the big picture of what the library is trying to achieve. This big picture is typically articulated in any or all of the following:

- a vision of excellence for your library in the future;
- a mandate or overriding purpose for your library;
- a strategic or long term plan which outlines the steps your library will take to achieve the picture of excellence;
- a service statement which defines the values of your library, that is the spirit in which the purpose or your picture of excellence will be achieved.

From these documents, goals and objectives flow annually into the work of each staff member. This process unifies and aligns the effort of all staff as they work toward outcomes which benefit the library.

Based on a shared purpose and direction, you and your staff define standards for the performance of the day-to-day work and for good service behaviours. To assist staff in meeting these standards and their goals and objectives, you discuss performance with each staff member, provide feedback, identify and discuss options or solutions to problems, and support changes which enhance performance.

At least annually, you prepare a performance appraisal, discussing with each staff member the work they have accomplished over the past year, and evaluating each employee's performance overall. At that time, new goals and objectives are finalized for the forthcoming year.

The diagram on the following page outlines the process of implementing a performance appraisal system.

The Performance Appraisal Process

Year 1

Build an environment for success

→

Establish performance standards collaboratively based on purpose and direction

→

Develop a performance appraisal form that measures standards and objectives

→

Meet with staff to negotiate annual objectives and review standards

Continuous performance feedback and support

Subsequent Years

Consult with staff to revisit library's purpose and direction

→

Address outstanding performance problems

→

Complete a written performance appraisal on each staff member and set new objectives

→

Meet with staff to discuss the year's performance

1.6.2.   Address Performance Priorities First

The outline of a performance system based on goals and objectives may seem daunting, especially when you look at the diagram on the preceding page. Be assured that the entire process described in this guide does not need to be in place before you begin negotiating goals or determining performance standards. This is a system which can be implemented over several years, as you become more and more comfortable with each step.

Don't be overwhelmed by the process.

Begin to implement the system by defining those supervisory problems in your library which present the greatest challenge to you:

- If the problems are related to the quality or reliability of service, start by developing a service statement (see 2.3 and Appendix B). With your staff, define behaviours and standards based on this statement (see 3. 1.2). Coach and monitor service delivery based on the standards (see 4.1).

- If your challenges are related to daily job performance, start by defining performance factors, and then determine the standards that demonstrate these factors in the daily work (see 3.1.1). Coach and monitor staff performance based on these standards (see 4.1).

- If the challenges you face are related to staff confusion about their roles and what is expected of them, begin with Section Four on Discussing Performance, or look at the characteristics of goals (see 2.2.2).

You will have noticed from the diagram entitled "The Performance Appraisal System", that the entire system rests on continuous performance feedback and support. You may find that practicing the processes and developing the skills outlined in Section Four, "Discussing Performance", will be a good refresher for you before you decide where to begin implementing performance appraisal.

Note that this system cannot be used effectively by beginning with Section Six, "Addressing Ongoing Performance Problems". In order to implement disciplinary measures, a case for discipline must be documented. Nor can this system be put in place simply by filling in an appraisal form. To be fair, staff must be aware of the performance standards and be given reasonable time to learn and practice the standards before their performance is evaluated.

1.7.   A Word about the Organization of this Guide

Within this guide, theory and practice, the why's and the how-to's are addressed under the same heading, whenever practical. For example, as part of Section Four, Discussing Performance, informal feedback is defined, along with how to phrase feedback, and when and how to offer feedback so that it can be used and applied.

Whenever additional information about a particular point appears elsewhere in the guide, references are given to the appropriate section.

To illustrate how this appraisal methodology falls into place, a brief scenario has been developed. The Trillium Public Library is a fictional setting for a small public library in Ontario.

To show you where you are in the process of developing the appraisal system, each section of the guide will begin with a variation of the diagram shown on page 9 (see 1.6.1), with the relevant stages highlighted.

The Appendixes contain information which may help to clarify or support some of the text in the guide. Appendix A and B contain tips and suggestions on developing a picture of excellence or vision for your library, as well as a service statement. As well, some sample documents can be found in the appendixes:

- a list of the standards from the American Library Association publication, ***Evaluating Library Staff***, by Patricia Belcastro
- the annual appraisal form from the Ottawa Public Library
- the appraisal form developed for The Trillium Public Library scenario.

Appendix G, 'Recommended Reading', is an annotated bibliography of the sources consulted in preparing this guide, including some useful web sites. The complete citations for authors quoted directly in the text can be found in Appendix G.
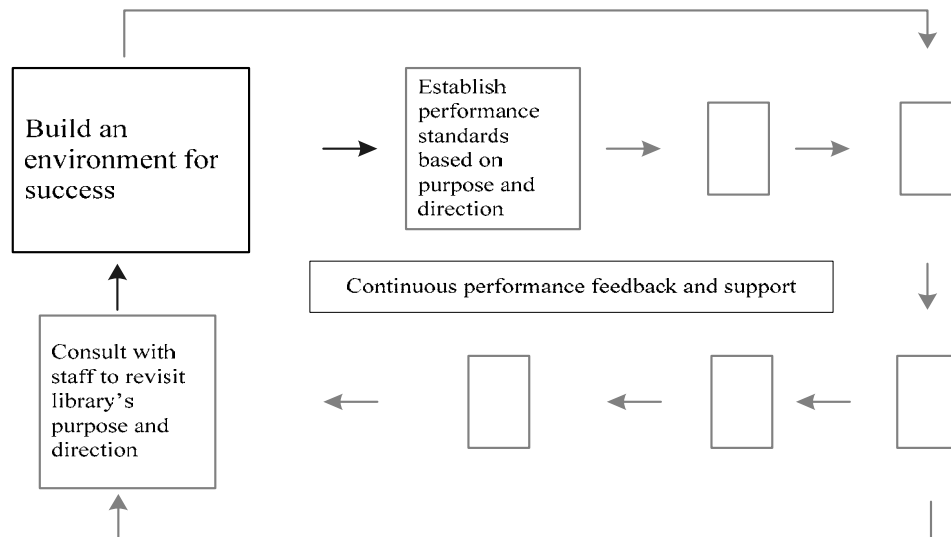
2. DEVELOPING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR SUCCESS

For many years, when supervisors prepared annual appraisals for their staff, they focused on the past. The supervisor looked for mistakes the employee had made over the past year, and what the mistakes indicated: perhaps more training was needed for better performance; or perhaps the employee needed to work at being better organized. Appraisal systems assumed that work was performed in a relatively stable environment, where the skills required to do a good job remained pretty much unchanged for years.

Looking at public libraries in Ontario over the last two decades, we can see that there are many political, technological, social, economic and human factors that regularly bring ongoing change to the workplace. As a supervisor, your challenge is to find how best to organize your staff to prepare for anticipated changes, without losing sight of the unique and important position your library holds in the community.

Typically, libraries and their boards manage change by developing planning documents that allow board, staff and funders to understand how anticipated changes will affect their library. Certainly, the most important responsibility of the library board is to determine the future plans for their library. These planning documents can include any or all of:

- a mission statement or statement of purpose: a phrase which succinctly defines what the library represents in its community;
- a unifying vision: an agreed upon future for the library in its community;
- a strategic or development plan: the initiatives the library will undertake to achieve its mission and/or vision, stated as goals and objectives;
- a service statement: the way the board, staff and community relate to, and value, each other; the spirit in which the vision/mission is achieved.

These planning documents may be collapsed into one document, such as a long-range plan or business plan, or they may be published individually. While the documents may bear different names in your library, their intent is the same.

If your library does not have any of these board documents to help guide it through changing times, consider consulting with your staff and board to determine what direction they would like their library to pursue. As a supervisor, you probably know what you want your library to be like when everything is exactly the way you want it, according to your picture of excellence for your library. When this picture is shared with staff, and approved by the board, it unifies everyone's work and establishes a framework for decision-making.

If developing these documents seems too daunting, SOLS consultants can provide support and guidance to help you develop and reach board agreement on any or all planning documents.

Remember that you can begin to implement a performance appraisal system before all the planning elements are defined and approved; however, the appraisal system falls into place more easily if at least one element has been completed. For example, the goals and objectives of each employee are given a meaningful context when they come from the library's planning document (see 2.2.1). Service standards make more sense when they are developed with an understanding of the board's service expectations (see 2.3).

This section of the guide will give a quick overview of the vision statement and the service statement. In addition, goals and objectives are given a fuller explanation later in this section, because of their importance to the appraisal process.

2.1. A Picture of Excellence: the Vision

Your picture of excellence for your library is your vision. When it is reviewed, approved and shared with staff, clients and board, it is an agreed to picture of a preferred future – of all the things our library could be, this is what we choose to become. The vision has the following characteristics:

- It is positive, inviting, and inclusive – everybody sees themselves in the picture, and wants to be part of making it happen;
- It anticipates change – it allows the library, its staff and patrons to prepare for the future;
- It is proactive – it describes what the library will be, not what it will not be;
- It is inspiring – it makes people feel optimistic and helps them weather the storms of funding cuts and political realignments, of staff changes, of community change. It is not a list of projects, it is a collection of dreams come true;
- It is motivating – it inspires staff to work cooperatively for their common cause, and funders to support this cause;
- It is unifying – it keeps everyone focused on where they are going together, not on separate or conflicting personal agendas;

- It is forward-looking – it describes the future, not the past. It recognizes that the library cannot return to what it used to be, but must change with its community;
- It is holistic – it sees the entire library as one unified system, not just a collection of separate parts or services;
- It is a picture of success.

For tips on developing a vision statement, see Appendix A.

To illustrate how these planning elements fall into place, we pay our first visit to The Trillium Public Library, a fictional small southern Ontario library.

The Trillium Public Library

Trillium, a small southern Ontario community, is located about 50 km north of a mid-sized city. At the beginning of the decade, the population of Trillium was aging. Fewer young families were choosing to stay in Trillium, and every year or two the community felt threatened by the possible closure of their local elementary school.

Until two years ago, the one constant for this community was the Trillium Public Library. Forty hours a week, Jackie and her staff of six (one other full-time employee, 3 part-time staff, and a dedicated volunteer) provided a safe, comfortable and familiar environment, where patrons could meet with their friends and neighbours, get help dealing with government forms, and find a good book to get them through the week. The only change library staff seemed to notice was increased use of the library during afternoon hours, with decreased use in the evening. Staff were hearing that their clients did not like going out in the evening anymore. Jackie and her staff were contemplating a new schedule for the library's hours of service.

Two years ago, a major manufacturing company announced plans to build a new plant in the nearby city, creating 500 new jobs in the region. Coincidentally, a local Trillium builder was developing a small townhouse complex and a 12-unit apartment block to accommodate local seniors who were downsizing. Before anyone knew it, these new housing units were snapped up by the families of the employees of the new plant. The local builder began building for this new market.

The new families loved Trillium, and they especially loved the Trillium Public Library. Many had come to Canada to secure a better future for their children. They considered the public library and the elementary school to be partners in achieving their dreams.

For some time, Jackie and her staff had been valiantly coping with ever-growing library use, the demand for materials in a variety of new formats and languages, the lineups at the Internet terminal, and requests for programs and story times. Then, during discussions at a staff meeting, it became clear to everyone that this growth in Trillium was an opportunity for the library to secure their own successful future.

After weeks of fact-finding, outreach to new and older residents, consultation with planning authorities and other community service providers, and input from local politicians and board members, the board approved a vision for the development of Trillium Public Library services. This is how the future was envisioned by the library staff:

> *It is a bright February Sunday afternoon at the Trillium Public Library. In a quiet **corner** by the window two retired teachers, new volunteers at the library, are developing a program for adults on Canadian idioms, part of their English as a Second Language course. Suddenly, preschoolers erupt from the story room in the new children's wing, running to parents who are browsing through the enticing collection of bright new picture books. Over by the bank of public access Internet terminals…*

The vision document concluded with:

> *Over the last five years, the Trillium Public Library has been learning, changing, and growing with its community.*

2.2.   Building Direction with Goals and Objectives

The vision is achieved by developing step-by-step system-wide initiatives. When organized chronologically and by priority, and approved by the board, these initiatives become the library's strategic plan.

The plan is the "how to's" of the vision; the library will achieve excellence by implementing specific changes. The specific changes the library plans to undertake are the library's goals; how the goals will be accomplished are the objectives.

There is often confusion between the words 'goal' and 'objective'. In daily conversation, these words are used interchangeably. Within the environment of performance appraisal and library planning, it is a good practice to decide on a preferred vocabulary. For you, a preferred term may already have been identified by your board. In this guide, a goal will be considered a project that is accomplished by completing a number of tasks and objectives are the identified tasks. The goal is what is achieved; the objectives are how it is done.

2.2.1.   Identifying Goals and Objectives for Each Employee

Goals and objectives cascade through the library. In a library with more than one level of supervision, the process works like this:

1. Board members identify and approve the changes, the special work and the projects they expect to see implemented in the current year. The board also approves the steps which will be taken to implement these changes. These are the board's goals and objectives. Generally, this is done as part of the budget process, in order to ensure that the resources are in place to support the goals and objectives.
2. The board's objectives become the CEO's goals. The CEO identifies the objectives, the steps to take to achieve the new goals. These objectives are the supervisor's goals.
3. The supervisor identifies those objectives of the CEO's which fall within his/her area of responsibility, and prepares a plan for accomplishing these goals. The steps in the plan, the supervisor's objectives, become staff goals.
4. When the supervisor's objectives are discussed, negotiated and agreed upon by staff, the supervisor's objectives become individual employee goals. Staff members bring to this discussion any special work they would like to accomplish, tasks they would like to undertake, or projects in which they would like to participate, that are in keeping with the board's overall plan for the year's work.
5. While the process described here is top-down, it is also bottom-up. Generally, Staff Members work together with supervisors to plan the forthcoming year's work. This assures that all the required resources are identified in the budget before it is sent to the board for approval. This also assures better alignment in the library when everyone working together Anticipates how forthcoming changes will affect their work.

If your library has one level of supervision, that is, you are both the CEO and the only supervisor, the board's objectives become your goals, your objectives become the goals for your staff members.

2.2.2.   Characteristics of Goals

*   Goals are top-down. They derive from the board's approved projects for the current year. These projects are passed on to the CEO, to supervisors, and on to staff. Therefore, the board's goals, the CEO's goals, the supervisors' goals and staff goals, must be discussed and shared, unless a goal is personal and/or confidential in nature.

- Goals align the work of the library. Goals demonstrate to staff how their individual efforts help to move the library forward and ensure that the entire organization is going in the same direction at the same time.

- Goals are bottom-up. They allow staff and supervisors to identify projects and work which can be included in the strategic plan as long as these projects pass the test: How do these goals and objectives contribute to achieving the vision? How does this work move the library forward?

- Goals are negotiated. Based on the supervisor's goals, staff and supervisor discuss and agree to projects each employee would like to undertake and how the projects contribute toward meeting the board's expectations for the year. This builds agreement and commitment and allows everyone to share in success.

- Goals are important work which requires employees to grow. Goals should challenge staff; when completed, staff should feel that they have accomplished work of significance, not just more of the same daily routine.

- Goals are few in number and achievable within the agreed upon timeframe. Important and significant projects require good planning, cooperation and resources. Depending on the board's direction for the year, staff may be involved in only one or two major projects. Staff should not have to abandon their regular work to cope with a barrage of special projects.

- Goals are stated simply, as clear, concrete actions which can be measured. The actions taken by the staff member, i.e., the objectives, and the results achieved must be easily observed. Complex or vaguely worded goals require constant clarification in order to delineate exactly what is expected of the staff by the supervisor.

- Goals require resources. Resources may include such costs as support from other staff members, team participation, a training program, special supplies, furniture, or time. The required resources need to be identified, budgeted for, and provided. Without the supporting resources, the staff member cannot control the work, and accomplish the goal.

- Goals can be personal. When there are recognized concerns about employee behaviours, or when an employee needs to develop new skills, goals and objectives chart a path for individual learning and growth.

The Trillium Public Library

After reviewing and debating all the projects that had to be undertaken over the next five years, the board decided that their first priority was service to children. While the board's plan was quite extensive, parts of it appeared in this way:

Board Goal: Provide a full range of library services for children (by Year 5)
Board Objective: Develop the Children's Collection (Year 1 – 3)
                     Develop Children's Programs (Year 1-3)

CEO Goal: Develop the Children's Collection (Year 1-3)
CEO Objective: Build the collection for preschoolers (Year 1)
                     Develop children's programs (Year 1-3)
                     Introduce a story time program (September, Year 1)

Staff Goal: Build the collection for pre-schoolers (Year 1, $4,000.00)
Staff Objectives: Using standard collection tools, weed picture book collection,
                     identify gaps (March 31, Year 1)
                     Develop list of priority book orders (May 1, Year 1)
                     Consult with acquisitions clerk to schedule ordering (April 1, Year 1)
                     Working with the acquisitions clerk, investigate and identify reliable
                     sources for non-print materials for preschoolers (July, Year 1)

Staff Goal: Introduce a story time program
Staff Objectives: Develop a 6 session series (to begin September Year 1)
                     Develop outreach to parents and to local children's service
                     providers to promote the program (June, Year 1)

As staff became more involved in their projects, and library use continued to escalate, managing time efficiently became a problem for everyone. It seemed to Jackie that staff members were grumpier, less willing to help each other, and in some cases, confused by all the changes. What were the priorities?

2.3.   The Service Statement

The library's vision describes what your library will be like in the future. The plan, your library's goals and objectives, describes the steps the library will take, the changes the library will make, to achieve excellence. The service statement defines the values which guide your library's operations and the spirit in which your shared picture of excellence will be achieved.

The service statement is used for the development of service standards. As a supervisor, you coach and support your staff to reach the service standards, and annually evaluate each employee's service performance in relation to the standards. For some tips on developing a service statement, see Appendix B.

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After review and discussion, the board approved the following service statement for their library:

> *Trillium Public Library serves as a constant support for the Trillium community, assuring that the quality and responsiveness of its library collections and services meet the changing individual needs of clients. Trillium Public Library staff support their community, their clients and each other in achieving successful service.*

With the service statement in place, Jackie and her staff can now move on to define what the phrase 'successful service' means, by writing service standards based on the statement. This will help Jackie explain to the staff, her own expectations of how the library's patrons should be served.

In service-driven libraries, the service statement focuses attention on the patron; it is a promise to the patron and to the community about the manner in which the library and its staff will behave. The service statement is also a promise to library staff. It recognizes that the quality of library service is determined by how well staff interacts with the public and with each other. It assures staff that their efforts to respect and observe the service values of the library will be recognized, and that the support and guidance they need for success will be provided. It clarifies for the board, the public, and especially for you and your staff, 'how we treat people around here.'
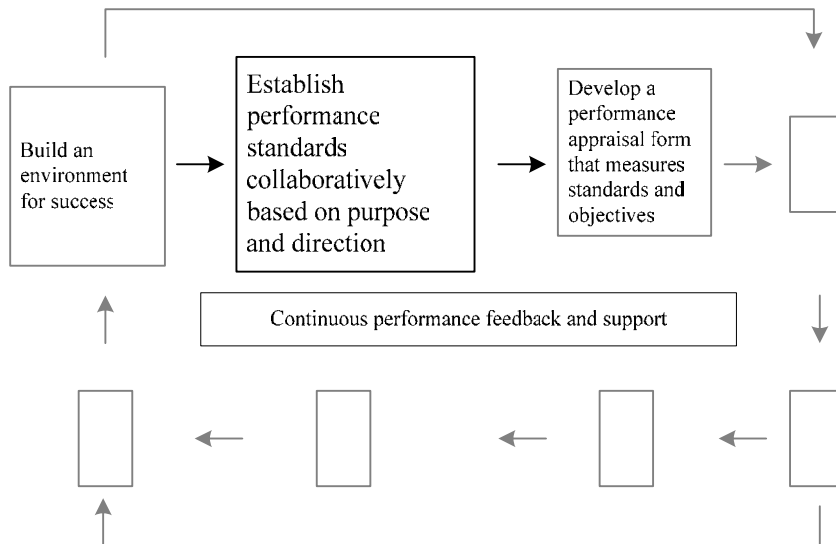
3. STANDARDS: MEASURING DAY TO DAY PERFORMANCE

While goals and objectives measure performance in terms of an employee's capacity to bring about positive change over time, **performance standards** measure performance in terms of the day to day demonstration of appropriate behaviours, knowledge, skills, abilities, and values. Standards describe, in objective terms, what it is that you expect to see from an employee who is performing well. As they are rooted in the day to day demands of the job, performance standards provide a necessary balance to the assignment of goals and objectives which are usually above and beyond the work to be performed daily.

Standards are a means of demonstrating consistency, neutrality, and fairness. All employees with the same job description are expected to meet the same standards for service and job performance; all supervisors are expected to apply the same standards in the same way to all employees. In cases of release from employment, the failure to meet established standards forms part of the employer's case for dismissal. It is important that standards describe reasonable performance expectations, recognizing the realities of the workplace.

The objective for the supervisor is to come up with a reasonable number of standards that represent the most important aspects of each particular job. For purposes of performance appraisal, between seven and ten standards will, in most cases, provide a sound basis against which to measure individual performance. With the use of standards, supervisors clarify their expectations about how they want the day-to-day work to be carried out, and the results they are seeking.

Consider, for example, training a new employee. As an experienced supervisor, you have established benchmarks, at least in your own mind, for each stage of training. You know what parts of the job to introduce to the new employee first, when to move on to the next step, and when, in your experience, the new employee has completed training and can do the job independently. These benchmarks are the training standards you have developed based on your experience in training staff and your knowledge of the job.

As a supervisor you also have benchmarks or standards, at least in your own mind, for how you expect your staff to do their work. The amount of work you expect to be performed are **output standards**. The quality you expect to see demonstrated in your staff's work, and the way you expect your staff to interact with the public, and with each other, are **performance and service standards**.

3.1.   Establishing Standards

In developing formal performance standards that reasonably reflect the demands of the workplace, supervisors draw on a number of sources: the job description for each position; operating procedures; library mission and vision; service statement; experience of staff performing the work.

While all standards that speak to any aspect of performance are performance standards, there are two common sub-groups included in the umbrella term. **Service standards** are performance standards that directly address delivery and quality of service; and **output standards** are performance standards that address quantity and productivity of work performed. It is important to understand that the term, **performance standard**, is used both to denote all types of standards used to appraise performance, and, sometimes, to refer specifically to those standards derived from job descriptions. See diagram below for an illustration of the deriving of performance standards.

Developing Standards

Working from	*Job Descriptions, Tasks, Procedures*	⇨	Identify	*Quantifiable Measures*	⇨	Write	**Output Standards**	Assess	Productivity Effeciency
Working from	*Job Descriptions*	⇨	Identify	*Performance Attributes*	⇨	Write	**Performance Standards**	Assess	Skills Knowledge Abilities
Working from	*Service Statement*	⇨	Identify	*Service Components*	⇨	Write	**Service Standards**	Assess	Behaviours Service Quality

3.1.1.   Standards Based on Performance Attributes

Performance attributes are the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of someone to do a job well. Also referred to as performance factors, job specifications, traits or competencies, they are those things that supervisors look for when interviewing applicants for a vacant position. For a more thorough explanation of performance attributes, see the SOLS publication, *Strategic Hiring: A Guide to Staff Recruitment,* by Barbara Baker.

There are, broadly speaking, two categories of performance attributes: those that might apply to all library staff, such as planning and organizing, or a strong service orientation; and those attributes specific to a particular job description. Some examples of performance attributes from public library settings that might apply to some, but not all, positions are: leadership; financial accountability; children's programming skills; public speaking; technical expertise.

Identifying key **performance attributes** for all staff is easier to do when working from the big picture. Performance attributes can be linked to the library's mission statement, strategic plan or service statement. When they are derived from the big picture, performance attributes can be used to evaluate all library staff. For example, in a small library that has identified working efficiently as a priority, the performance attribute "productivity" may be identified. In a library emphasizing public access to the internet and electronic resources, "technology skills" become an important performance attribute.   "Communications skills" may be identified as a key attribute for all staff in a library with a service statement that promises friendly, personable service to customers and colleagues.

Performance standards are, in turn, derived from performance attributes. Standards are specific behaviour-based statements that define or describe a performance attribute. The statement or standard can be used as a benchmark against which to measure an individual's performance. Someone expected to exhibit time management, for example, must be seen to organize and prioritize work to meet multiple demands. The standard describes what the attribute looks like in objective, observable terms; it describes the particular behaviours to demonstrate and the actions to take when performing the job well. In some cases, it takes more than one standard to define a performance attribute. The following are some examples of performance standards derived from performance attributes identified by Ottawa Public Library:

Performance Attribute	Performance Standard
Thoroughness/ Accuracy	Attends to detail and to completeness. Absence of errors in job performance.
Good relations with supervisors	Accepts and supports decisions. Keeps supervisors informed of pertinent matters.
Collection knowledge	Knows the collection. Provides prompt access to the correct information for the patron.
Punctuality	Conforms to working hours; proper adherence to lunch and break periods.

When identifying performance attributes, ask yourself:

- What knowledge, skills and abilities should employees have to be able to do this particular job successfully?

When identifying performance standards, ask yourself:

- How will I know employees have the knowledge, skills and abilities they require?
- What actions and behaviours will demonstrate to me that they are doing the job successfully?

In most library settings, the performance standards used in performance appraisal will be a mix of general, or collective, standards that apply to all staff, and job-specific standards for each position.

3.1.2.   Standards Based on a Service Commitment

Just like performance standards, **service standards** are derived from performance attributes, but they focus on those attributes specifically related to providing good service. Service standards tend to be tied to the library's big picture, coming from the library's service statement or commitment to service. They identify the particular behaviours that employees demonstrate and the actions they take when they are engaged in providing good service. See Appendix D for a work form designed to translate a service statement into service standards.

Here are some performance attributes and corresponding standards specifically related to service from the Ottawa Public Library.

Performance Attribute	Performance Standard
Ability to deal with public demands/complaints	Deals with public demands and complaints in a calm, efficient and objective manner.
Approachability	Presents a friendly image. Is available and aware of the needs of the public.

When identifying service-based performance attributes, ask yourself:

- What knowledge, skills and abilities should employees have to be able to serve patrons and co-workers successfully?

When identifying service standards, ask yourself:

- How will I know employees have the knowledge, skills and abilities they require?
- What actions and behaviours will demonstrate to me that they are doing the job successfully?

For the complete Ottawa Public Library performance appraisal form, see Appendix E.

3.1.3.   Standards Based on Productivity

Output standards, which identify the **quantity** of work to be performed in a given time period, are the means by which most employers monitor productivity. Output standards are based on objective information, factual, quantitative, and unarguable. They are the record of how much has been done, not how well it was done. Some staff may maintain these work counts regularly, as part of the library's statistics package, for example, items circulated, reference questions answered, class visits conducted.

Output standards are established by determining an average and reasonable number of times the same work can be performed within a specific time period (per hour, per year, etc.). Some examples are:

- average number of interlibrary loan requests processed per hour
- average number of new books processed per hour
- average number of class visits per month

Such output standards can be useful training tools. For example, "re-shelves one cart of non-fiction returns per hour" can be a standard for library pages or volunteers to work toward achieving.

Output standards may also be used to indicate a need to balance quantity of work with available resources. If, for example, there is more work than current staff can process, there may be a need for more staff, for better equipment, or for staff training. All output standards are subject to change if the amount of work or the way the work is carried out changes.

In libraries, the use of output standards to evaluate employee performance is less common than in production-based organizations. Generally speaking, libraries and other service organizations are more interested in assessing **quality** of work over **quantity**. As well, the fluctuating demands of public service often make quantity of work performed beyond the control of library staff.

Nevertheless, in libraries focused on service, some output measures may be applicable as measures of service performance. For example, "time required to fill a request for purchase" can be a measure of the individual's and the library's responsiveness to the community. A service-driven staff, committed to being responsive will strive to shorten the length of time the patron has to wait.

3.2.   Using Standards to Assess Performance

To develop performance standards for your staff, begin by deciding where your biggest challenge lies. If you feel comfortable with the competence of your staff but have some concerns about their service skills, define your expectations for service. If you feel that staff members need to improve their reference skills, start by defining your expectations for this work. Train and coach your staff to meet your expectations. (see 4.1) If your greatest supervisory challenge focuses on one employee, you must be able to demonstrate that standards for the job are in place, and that all employees doing the same job are expected to meet the same standards, before beginning any disciplinary action. (see 6.1)

Guard against identifying every possible performance attribute and standard that you could use to describe appropriate staff behaviours in your library. Work toward developing a balanced list of the most important skills, abilities and behaviours that you want staff to demonstrate on the job, and which best speak to the values of your library. Keep asking yourself how important is this attribute or standard to overall satisfactory performance, to doing a good job.

When you are developing standards remember to describe the actions or behaviours you want your staff to demonstrate. Do not define standards in terms of attitudes. As attitude can not be measured in any meaningful way, you can not determine accurately if the standard has been met. (see 5.2)

Most publications on performance appraisal consider the definition of standards the responsibility of the supervisor as a way of documenting expectations. There are, however, many benefits when staff and supervisors work together to determine standards. Here are a few of the benefits:

- the standards are realistic and achievable, based on the experience of the employees who perform the work;
- there is shared agreement on what is a fair expectation of good service and on how performance can be demonstrated;
- employees are more willing to buy into the standards, when they share their expectations of themselves and their co-workers in the workplace;

- for team-building purposes, all staff know and understand the standards, and support each other, and new staff, in meeting them;
- both staff and supervisors have improved knowledge and understanding of each others' work and the issues that affect it;
- successful behaviours are validated, allowing all staff to identify and model experienced and/or high performing staff.

You may find defining standards a cumbersome or complicated task. However, the best thing about standards is that when staff are trained in, understand, and are supported in achieving and maintaining the standards, they generally take responsibility for managing their own behaviour. People like to know what is expected of them and tend to perform well when they do.

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With a service statement in place, Jackie and her staff could begin to identify the performance attributes and corresponding standards. They met and discussed the phrase from the service statement, "successful service", and looked at their job descriptions. They talked about how they could consistently show good service to their clients; they focused on what successful service would feel like and sound like. This helped them to envision the actions they would take when helping each other and their patrons.

After much debate and some judicious editing, they prepared a list of six attributes, and the behaviours which then represented the most important performance and service standards.

This was their list:
   The Trillium Public Library staff demonstrates their support for their community, their clients and each other in achieving successful service through:

1. Service Orientation
    - Gives priority to requests for service and assistance from patrons and colleagues over personal work.

2. Courtesy and Approachability
    - Speaks in a friendly manner to patrons and co-workers in person and on the telephone.
    - Treats patrons and co-workers politely.
    - Acknowledges patrons waiting for service.
    - Demonstrates good listening skills.

3. Respect for Patrons and Colleagues
   - Shows respect for co-workers and patrons, open and receptive to different points of view.
   - Resists value judgements about individuals and their information or reading choices.

4. Competence in Information and Reading Services
   - Demonstrates good knowledge of all areas of the collection.
   - Keeps collection knowledge up to date.
   - Conducts a reference interview to accurately determine patron's need.
   - Recommends library materials and sources for information appropriate for individual patron needs.
   - Confirms that services and materials provided have met individual needs.

5. Commitment to the library in its community
   - Keeps up to date on community and library developments.
   - Explains policies, services and library development plans and changes in a positive manner.
   - Brings any personal or community concerns about the library to the supervisor.

6. Ability to Handle Conflict
   - Remains calm and objective in conflict situations.
   - Demonstrates a desire to understand the concerns disguised by the emotions.
   - Problem-solves to resolve the situation, respectful of all parties.

All staff was now expected to meet these standards. They would be supported in achieving the standards by Jackie, and their team colleagues.

Jackie knew it was time to brush up on her feedback skills. There were some areas where she felt she needed to improve before she could give helpful and appropriate guidance to her staff.

Continuous performance feedback and support
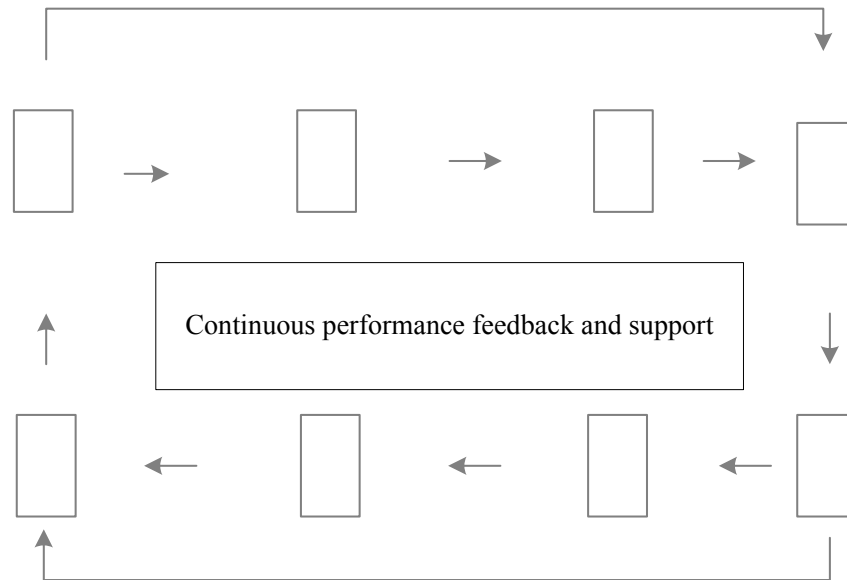
4. DISCUSSING PERFORMANCE

Performance discussions, in which staff behaviour is compared to the performance standard, are the critical moments in your ongoing efforts to help employees learn and do well.

Effective supervisors are always learning and growing with their staff. They depend on each other for information, for identifying problems and exploring solutions. They keep each other on track, working together toward their shared picture of excellence for their library. Both staff and supervisors use informal feedback and regularly scheduled performance meetings to keep motivation and learning high.

This section looks at establishing a safe environment for supervisor/staff discussions. Included are some techniques for providing helpful feedback, for handling emotional and confrontational behaviour, and for creating a workplace where employees feel free to speak.

4.1. Giving Informal Feedback

Giving informal feedback is the essence of coaching. It occurs anytime you and your staff discuss the best way to carry out a task, or to serve a customer. While it is usually verbal, feedback may also be written. Because feedback is two-way, it may be initiated by either you or your staff members. Informal feedback opens, supports and encourages communication among, and between, staff and supervisors.

For your staff, it creates an opportunity to ensure that they are doing what is expected of them, and to request clarification of the standards which they are working toward achieving. It is an opportunity for staff to update supervisors on the progress of their daily work and their special projects, and to identify and discuss any problems which they have not been able to resolve on their own.

For you, it is an opportunity to praise successful learning and reinforce appropriate behaviour, identify problems and offer suggestions, and to clarify standards. Because feedback assures that employee performance is not left to chance, it is the primary reason that goals and objectives based appraisal methods are so successful. Providing feedback and coaching as staff members learn shows that you care about their achievements.

When giving informal feedback:

- Respect the confidentiality of the employee's learning efforts by giving feedback privately. This demonstrates respect and helps reduce the employee's stress.

- Try to speak unemotionally.

- Listen carefully to what the employee has to say; there may be other problems affecting the employee's ability to meet the performance standards. You may need to provide additional support to the employee in their efforts to correct their behaviour.

- Speak always in terms of action and result: 'When the circulation desk is left unattended, line-ups form and patrons are unsure where to check their books out. How else do you think this could have been handled?'

- Recognize achievement with praise. Since praise reinforces appropriate behaviours, it is important to offer praise at the time the employee meets the standards or achieves a goal or objective. State clearly what the employee has accomplished, how the work has met the standard, what the effects of the accomplishment are, and offer praise sincerely.

- Turn mistakes into learning opportunities. Negative comments are de-motivating and decrease the likelihood of improvement. Begin with positive statements about employee efforts, express concerns based on the standard, describe the effect of the behaviour, and offer positive suggestions for achieving the standard. Negative feedback works only when it is balanced and specific enough to be put to use.

- Verify, clarify, and follow up. Know the standards, stick to the standards.

- Keep it in perspective. Mistakes, slip-ups, and poor decisions, are all part of learning. Always think about how you can enable the learning.

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Jackie began to make it a practice to be available to staff, helping them through sticky service situations, and thanking them for handling difficult requests skillfully. Being available to staff showed her support for them as they learned to focus their attention on the meaning of the standards. Only Helen seemed to have ongoing problems meeting service expectations. Jackie said to Helen:

"It's good to see how well your collection project is going, Helen. Right now I need help at the reference desk. After school is a busy time and we need to count on each other's help, since, according to our standard, each of us must "give priority to requests for service and assistance from patrons and colleagues over personal work". Was there some reason you were not able to help out?

"Looming deadlines? Let's get together tomorrow and discuss time frames."

Jackie made a note about the event, dated it and dropped it in her 'Helen' file as a critical incident for later reference.

Later that week Jackie said to Helen:

"I very much appreciate the way you stepped in to help Norma at the desk this afternoon. She was swamped and you offered your help immediately. Without your support, we would not have been able to handle all the students. You were a big help today, Helen. We all appreciate being able to count on you. Does the new deadline for your collection project still seem reasonable?"

Jackie made a note about the event, dated it and dropped it in her 'Helen' file.

4.2.   Handling Emotion and Defensiveness

Neither employees nor supervisors like discussing performance. Judging, and being judged, makes both of you feel vulnerable. Your staff may worry that their efforts on the library's behalf are not fully recognized, or worse still, discounted. You may worry that, even with greatest care, you might offend, overlook or minimize the staff member's achievements, or not find the words to address behavioural changes and issues of learning and growth in a supportive and motivating way.

It can be helpful to remember that all relationships between people happen within an emotional context. Disagreements are normal, manageable, and necessary for productive growth and change. It is important to work every day at creating an environment in your library where you and your staff feel problems can be discussed safely, without either of you feeling defensive. In such an environment, feedback can be offered without being rejected.

Here are some types of behaviour which help reduce feelings of vulnerability and defensiveness, and which may help to build a more relaxed and comfortable atmosphere:

- Be balanced and fair. Always speak respectfully, and in detail of the other person's successes and achievements. Explain how those efforts have moved the library forward, and helped the employee to reach his or her own goals for growth and success.

- Surprise attacks make people defensive. When scheduling a meeting to discuss performance, following up on a complaint from the public, for instance, make sure that both you and your staff member have had time to consider the problem, as well as alternate ways that the problem could have been addressed.

- Look at the system, not the person, when problems arise. Describe behavioural problems as corrections needed in the smooth functioning of the overall system, not as a personal inadequacy or failure. Speak in terms of actions and results. Identify the problem, when it occurs, and the result. Be specific. A vague or generalized problem cannot be corrected. Work toward a shared agreement on the problem.

- Use "I" messages; avoid "You" messages. "You" messages blame and deny responsibility; "I" messages express and take responsibility for a point of view. "You" messages are reactive, and appear when a person feels threatened.

- Watch for signs of emotional discomfort: crossed legs, folded arms, lowered shoulders, eyes looking away or down. Validate the other person's feelings and call a break. Stand up and stretch, shift position, smile. "I can see that this discussion is not very comfortable. Maybe we can take a break, perhaps a stretch?" Note that behaviours that show discomfort or unease are culturally based. Always verify that you are interpreting body language correctly.

- Recognize anger as a protective mechanism and, usually, a secondary emotion. Loss of self-esteem, embarrassment, fear and guilt, may manifest themselves visibly as anger. Try to understand the underlying emotions and respond to the primarily emotional response. It is interesting to note that anger causes blood to flow away from the brain, making it difficult for an angry person to process information calmly. Angry people respond to what they feel, not what they know. Generally triggered by other stresses, we can minimize anger by decreasing defensiveness.

- Invite participation in solving the problem. Ask lots of open questions and ask for elaboration on the answers. Leave room for the other person to talk without interruption and pay attention to the details in the answers. Do not do all the talking; people can reject one-way communication.

- Listen attentively. Show open and receptive body language; personify calm, friendly and reasonable behaviour. Nod that the message is being heard, not rejected; jot down a note from time to time; focus attentively on the speaker. Pause to make sure the other person is finished speaking, that the thought has been completed.

- Don't dwell on the problem. Concentrate more on positive steps that can be taken jointly to correct the problem. Keep discussions moving forward toward solutions and positive outcomes, rather than returning to what went wrong.

- Be flexible; avoid either/or thinking. Don't impose solutions, but look at options and choices to find the most comfortable fit.   There are no quick fixes or instant solutions for modifying behaviour. Learning new behaviours and new skills happens slowly, step by step.

- Never assume that the problem is not your fault. Listen to feedback on your own behaviour, on the actions you have taken, and learn more successful ways to help people thrive. Be thankful for the insight and ask for follow-up feedback. Showing trust enables you and your staff to work cooperatively.

- Work toward a shared solution. Try to get agreement on the problem and on the steps you and your employee will each take to achieve a resolution. Try inviting the other person to summarize the agreement.

- Follow up, follow up, follow up.

4.3.   Supporting Open Communication

In order for staff to make good decisions and learn to work independently, they need to be well informed. Open communication and the exchange of information comprise the respiratory system of the library. Regular staff meetings and problem- solving discussions give supervisors an opportunity to observe their team in action, and to build intra–team communication and problem solving skills.

As the supervisor, leading your staff through discussions, encouraging their input, mediating differences, confronting counter-productive behaviour, and reflecting on progress, you can help your staff develop productive skills for working together.

Five Roles that further group process and maintain relations among group members:

Role:	What this role is trying to facilitate:	An example of language used in this role:
Supporting	• Agreement • Understanding • Praise	• "That's a good idea …" • "I can understand why you're angry with me. Can we talk about …"
Gatekeeping	• Equal participation in the group • Prevent monopoly • Encourage input	• "We haven't yet heard what Jack has to say." • "David, you look like you're not sure about the direction we're taking. Is there anything you'd like to say?"
Mediating	• Resolving differences by getting at underlying issues and concerns	• "It seems to me that some of Ann's concerns are valid. On the other hand, I don't think we should reject Bob's idea totally. Can we talk about this some more?"
Confronting	• Name a dysfunctional, counter-productive behaviour (saying what you see)	• "Margaret, you keep interrupting Lisa before she's finished. I'm having difficulty following what she's trying to tell us."
Reflecting	• Sharing observations on process, behaviour and/or emotions	• "We seem to be stuck. Maybe we should leave this for a while." • "I have noticed that the discussion is getting more heated. Does anyone want to talk about what they're feeling?"

Observing the way staff members communicate and solve problems provides valuable information for you to improve your own communication skills. Notice if staff members are comfortable with you and with each other when discussing problems. When does body language change, or is everyone relaxed, at ease, open, and listening for understanding?

Listening with care provides opportunities for you to identify each staff member's preferred learning /communication style. For example,

- **aural**. Listens attentively. Uses words and phrases like 'I'm going to a lecture on…', or, 'our patrons are saying', or, 'I was listening to …'   People who prefer to learn by listening may like to discuss problems and talk through solutions.

- **visual**. Observes events, watches others to see their reactions. Uses words and phrases like 'I saw in the paper that…', or, 'I'll look into that', or, 'let me paint you a picture…' People who are visual learners may like to read about a problem, and possible solutions, or look it up on the internet before making a decision. Their contribution to discussions is supported by written agendas, minutes, memos, etc.

- **kinesthetic**. Learns by doing, from experience. Evaluates ideas according to how they make him/her feel, how well s/he feels it will work. Uses words and phrases like 'I can do that', or, 'it wasn't a very comfortable situation', or, 'I'd like to try this before deciding'. Kinesthetic learners like to experience problems and processes, before coming to a consensus on the solution.

What is each staff member's preferred time frame? Just as each staff member communicates and learns in a preferred way, aurally, visually, or kinesthetically, many people make sense of their world from a different point in time. For example,

- **the past**. May be reluctant to abandon the values or systems and practices that were previously in place without some recognition of their value. Uses words and phrases like 'I like this place, I grew up in a small town just like this', or, 'we used to…', or, 'in my experience'. These staff members are rich in an understanding of the library's past and how it has developed. They may need extra support when going through a period of rapid change.

- **the present**. Wants to address problems immediately, and put new systems and procedures in place right away. May be more focused on objectives than longer range goals. Uses words and phrases like 'I'll get on that right away', or, 'I want to finish this before going home', or, 'let's stick to the agenda.' People whose preferred time frame is the present may want to understand what their work day will be like in the library of the future, what they will do, how they will do it.

- **the future**. Always thinking ahead, very goal-oriented, interested and excited by the vision of the new library. Uses words and phrases like 'I can't wait until', or, 'what's on the agenda for tomorrow?' or, 'just think, next year at this time…' Employees with a strong future orientation may be good planners. They will be quick to commit to your picture of excellence for the library, and can help their colleagues to understanding and commitment.

Discover the way each staff member thinks. Observing the way each staff member solves problems, processes information, and makes sense of the world, gives you a way to best present new ideas, introduce change or train staff in new skills.

- **the linear thinker**. Moves through a problem or explores a new idea step by step, resolving each issue before reaching a conclusion or resolution. May be good process people, interested in the details; can be good at training new staff.

- **the leaper**. Gathers all the information presented, and after a period of reflection, leaps to the solution or to understanding. Once they know the solution, leapers return to the problem to fill in the details, if pressed. Is comfortable talking about and exploring the 'big picture'.

All of us have kinesthetic, visual and aural communication and learning patterns, depending on the task. All of us make sense of the present in relation to past experiences or future thoughts. We all process information and solve problems both step by step, and by leaping to solutions. Identifying and communicating in each staff member's preferred style allows supervisors and colleagues to exchange suggestions and ideas clearly. Once we are alert to these communication cues, it becomes easier to adapt messages and information so that we can exchange ideas with better understanding. We can save a considerable about of time by making our messages easier to understand and our expectations clearer.

4.4. Improving Your Coaching Skills

Here are some winning behaviours for supervisors to practice to supporting their staff and helping build an open environment for communication in the workplace.

4.4.1. Focus on the Future

Supervisors who focus on the future are able to take the library's vision, service statement, goals and objectives, and make the future happen. They do this by constantly calling attention to the picture of excellence they share with their staff. This shared vision motivates and energizes, giving meaning and perspective to the day-to-day work. Because it is a shared vision, it unites staff and invites and promotes cooperation.

A focus on the future keeps everyone receptive to change and working toward excellence.

4.4.2. Focus on Service

Service-oriented supervisors never quit working at improving service. They know that the most critical moment for the library is when each patron's individual needs are met during a positive experience. They know service happens one patron at a time, and they enthusiastically support a better and better experience for each patron, one patron at a time. These supervisors know that coaching occurs everyday, not just when a problem arises.

Because service does not happen by accident, service-driven supervisors commit to training, learning and skills development for themselves and for their staff. Just as they understand that music is not in the notes but in how the notes are played, they understand that service is not defined by rules, regulations and standards, but in how these guidelines are applied. Coaching assures that staff members are always ready to serve, that they have all the skills they need, as well as permission to keep improving the service experience for the patron.

Service-oriented supervisors keep raising the bar; they have high standards and are clear about their expectations of their staff. They attend meticulously to the details of service, monitoring, coaching, coaching, monitoring. They believe that we all have to work at getting better all the time.

4.4.3. Model the Message

Service-driven supervisors go the extra mile for their staff, just as they do for library patrons. They give credibility to the library's service promise. Staff members trust supervisors who expect the same from themselves as they do from their staff.

These supervisors are attentive to their own growth, seeking feedback from staff and patrons on how to do better. They understand that getting better is a cooperative effort, not something that someone else has to do. They work constantly at changing their own behaviour in ways that will help their staff achieve.

While they are clear about their role on the team, the service-oriented coach knows that sharing the dream means sharing the work. Just as they are prepared to pitch in and help their staff when help is needed, so also, when they need advice and guidance, they turn to their staff. Sharing work and sharing decisions builds the team and wins commitment to the same goals. Coaches understand that success belongs to the team; their job is to point the team toward achievement.

4.4.4. Focus on the Big Picture

When supervisors are committed to their picture of excellence and service promise, they can lead their staff through funding cuts, reorganizations, and changes in leadership, political shifts, and other events that impact on the strategic plan, without losing the way. They know that change brings opportunities, and are prepared to realign goals and objectives to take advantage of any new opportunities.

Even throughout times of major change, they continue to be guided by the picture of excellence for the library in its community, incorporating these changes into their vision. They believe that when people know where they are going, what they have to do to get there, and how they have to behave along the way, they will arrive successfully.

For such supervisors, changes in the plan are just detours on the road to the future. It is belief in the vision and the commitment to service that gives the library and the staff the energy to stay the course. These supervisors are predictable in their response to change.

4.4.5. Value Staff

Supervisors who value their staff know that everything they themselves achieve is through people. They select and hire staff for the variety of their skills and abilities, and for their commitment to the library. They know that the team's strength lies in the differences of its staff, and the unity of their commitment. Together with their team, they respect the differences and honor the commitment. For more information on staff selection and hiring, see the SOLS guide, *Strategic Hiring: a Guide to Staff Recruitment*.

Supervisors who value staff are attentive to the needs of each individual staff member, working hard to ensure an open environment for comfortable communication, where staff can speak without fear of reprisal. They trust how the boss will react.

And while coaches are serious about their vision of excellent library service, they enjoy themselves in the midst of hard work, and make it possible for others to do the same. They know that it is disheartening to work with people who have little enthusiasm for the job, so they celebrate achievements and laugh at their own slip ups, because a shared laugh keeps everything in perspective.

Over time, you will become adept at making the annual appraisal meaningful, helpful and rewarding for each of your employees, and less burdensome for yourself, if you:

- Understand that learning happens gradually;
- Are able to learn these coaching techniques;
- Offer motivating feedback;
- Create an environment where staff feel free to offer opinions and suggestions; and
- Come to understand how individual staff members prefer to communicate and learn.

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| | Establish performance standards based on purpose and direction | → | Develop a performance evaluation form that measures standards and objectives | → | Meet with staff to negotiate annual objectives and review standards |

Continuous performance feedback and support

| | Address outstanding performance problems | ← | Complete a written appraisal and set new objectives | ← | Meet with staff to discuss the year's performance |

5. APPRAISING PERFORMANCE

With ongoing supportive, corrective and motivating feedback a regular practice, you and your staff are ready to assess how work has gone over the last year, what needs further attention, and what the plans are for the forthcoming year. When implementing performance appraisal for the first time, supervisors and employees must look ahead only. It is unfair to evaluate past performance on the basis of new standards.

Occasionally, supervisors implement a performance appraisal system to control, warn or even punish employees whom they consider problems. When properly implemented, a goals and objectives based performance appraisal system provides many opportunities for addressing ongoing performance concerns through feedback, and recognizing and validating staff achievement. No fair appraisal focuses on failure. A fair appraisal looks at an employee's behaviours and achievements over an extended period of time, to ensure a well-balanced and representative record of a staff member's work.

This section is designed to lead you step by step through the process of preparing and delivering the annual performance appraisal.

5.1. The Performance Appraisal Defined

The performance appraisal is a written evaluation of the accomplishments and actions of an employee over an agreed period of time, usually one year. It is prepared by the employee's direct supervisor, or the person most familiar with the employee's work, in the case of a special assignment, for example. While it is the property of the library and a confidential document which forms part of an employee's record of employment, a copy is always given to the employee for his/her own records.

The performance appraisal is historic in nature, since it reviews the accomplishments of the past year; it is also future-oriented, since it finalizes the new goals for the forthcoming year.

The appraisal looks at all aspects of an employee's work; day-to-day performance, the quality of the service provided, and the amount of work performed. The supervisor's judgements about performance should always be validated with examples of employee behaviour, known as critical incidents (see 5.3).

There should be no surprises for the employee in the written appraisal. Any employee or supervisory concerns should have been discussed previously, through informal feedback and in one-on-one meetings.

Just as service-motivated library staff focus on the patron's individual needs, so do service-motivated supervisors focus on their employee's individual needs. They provide support and clear direction for staff within the context of a fair, honest and motivating appraisal.

5.2.   Evaluate Behaviour

Evaluate behaviour; that is, the actions that your employee has taken, and the effect of these actions. The actions and their effects demonstrate that the staff member has met or not met the performance standards.

Sometimes, supervisors attempt to evaluate attitude, rather than behaviour. Comments on attitude are the opinions of the evaluator, and are based on impressions, since attitude cannot be measured in any meaningful way. Comments on behaviour and its effects give employees useful information which they can apply to improve performance. Compare these two statements:

Helen is uncooperative (opinion)

Helen speaks in an abrupt and cold manner to both coworkers and library patrons when interrupted in a task. As a result, Helen cannot be relied upon to support the work of the service team because library patrons and co-workers are reluctant to approach when Helen seems occupied. Helen does not meet the service standard: Gives priority to requests for service and assistance from patrons and colleagues over personal work.

The second statement identifies the exact behaviour that needs to be changed, when the behaviour occurs, and why it is important to change the inappropriate behaviour. This gives the employee information from which to learn and change.

When assessing performance, compare the actual behaviour with the expected behaviour, i.e., the standard.

5.3.   Document Learning: Critical Incidents

Critical incidents are specific examples of your employee's performance. They are the successes and problems which demonstrate whether your staff member has met the performance standards, and that the agreed upon goals and objectives have been accomplished. When these examples of actions and output are noted, dated and collected throughout the year, you will find that patterns of progressive improvement, as well as recurring problems, can be identified.

In a balanced and fair annual assessment, these records validate staff achievements, as well as less appropriate actions or decisions. Critical incidents verify to your staff that they are doing what you expect of them. If there are areas in performance which need attention, critical incidents demonstrate exactly where the problem is, so that the staff member can address it.

When noting critical incidents, look for examples of typical behaviour, not isolated events or unique, unusual actions which are not characteristic of the employee's performance. Supervisors who focus on the occasional employee lapse or mishap soon earn a reputation among staff for being unfair and untrustworthy.

Only examples of critical incidents which you have already discussed with your employee should be included in the annual appraisal; this helps to decrease defensiveness (see 4.2).

5.4.   Developing the Appraisal Form

Libraries develop standard evaluation forms as part of their personnel documents package. When developing or revising the appraisal form in-house, inviting ideas, input and participation from your staff supports their understanding of the purpose and uses of the form, of the standards, and of any rating systems that are used and how the ratings are determined. Appraisal forms include some or all of the following information:

- name of library
- name of employee, position title, work location (branch, department), date of employment
- time period covered by the review
- name and position of reviewing supervisor
- type of review: annual, probationary, acting, other
- performance factors and standards (see 3.1, 3.2)
- rating charts (see 5.4.1)
- the past year's goals and objectives, with space for comments
- work plan for the forthcoming year, including new goals and objectives (see 5.6.3)
- space for comments by employee, supervisor (see 5.6.2) and third party reviewer, if applicable (see 5.9)

- signatures and dates:
  - supervisor signs that s/he has prepared the review
  - staff member signs that s/he has read the review
  - third party reviewer signs that s/he has read the review and the employee's and supervisor's comments

The performance appraisal form, at its best, is an opportunity to articulate and reinforce a culture of service and excellence. By specifying performance expectations in clear language, and by tying individual performance to the library's purpose and vision, the form itself can be used as a training tool and a means of clarifying what it takes to b a good performer. Regardless of the particular design, of the language used, it is important that the form provides for feedback on daily accomplishments (adherence to performance standards) and efforts to bring about change and improve service (annual goals and objectives).

Comments, examples of behaviour, and explanations for ratings, do not have to be confined to the form. Attach as much additional information as you need, if it helps your employee understand the points you are trying to make.

Examples of performance appraisal forms are included in the appendixes.

5.4.1.   Rating Charts

Rating charts are almost always used when evaluating performance. Ratings are assigned for overall performance and for each standard.

Some appraisal systems grade the performance standards, assign an overall rating, add up the marks and give a kind of pass/fail number according to how well the employee demonstrated the behaviours needed to succeed in the job. However, assigning numbers to performance is generally believed to focus discussion on the numbers, rather than on the behaviours. For this reason, rating systems which use words or phrases to define performance are preferred.

Here are some examples of rating terms which are in common use:

Example #1:

- ❏ greatly exceeds standard
- ❏ exceeds standard
- ❏ meets standard
- ❏ occasionally meets standard
- ❏ consistently below standard

Example #2:

- ❏ outstanding
- ❏ above average
- ❏ average
- ❏ below average
- ❏ unacceptable

Example #3:

- ❏ exceptional
- ❏ superior
- ❏ fully successful
- ❏ fair
- ❏ needs improvement

Historically, the designers of performance appraisal forms have used language that signifies mediocrity to indicate the mid-point or average performer on the rating scale, e.g. "competent", "acceptable", "meets expectations". More recently, human resources professionals are considering the negative impact of labeling someone as mediocre when, in reality, they are good performers (not superior or exemplary, but good). Recent terms for the mid-point of the scale include "good solid performer: and "fully successful", and experience indicates that these terms generate good feeling on the part of the employee, despite the fact that there are still one or two higher ratings possible.

Because even these terms can be open to interpretation, some organizations have started to identify the behaviours that demonstrate the highest to the lowest standards. For a standard, such as 'follows established procedures', the rating chart might look like this:

❑　　Exceptional. Is able to introduce many workable improvements to streamline procedures and routines and ease backlogs. Able to explain and train new staff in procedures.

❑　　Superior. Occasionally provides helpful suggestions for improving work flow. Demonstrates good understanding of the purposes for the procedures and is able to help others as needed.

❑　　Satisfactory. Understands all the routines and procedures and is able to perform the job independently and with low incidence of error.

❑　　Unsatisfactory. Demonstrates little knowledge of established routines and procedures and is unable to work independently.

Note that ratings are usually ranked on a three to five point scale. Scales that allow for greater distinctions between terms are better at recognizing the efforts made by the employee, that is, that performance is not just good, bad or indifferent.

In general, try not to assign a rating to a standard or to an overall performance without being prepared to justify the rating. Critical incidents are especially important to include when assigning unsatisfactory or exceptional ratings.

5.5.　The Pre-appraisal Meeting

The pre-appraisal meeting has three goals:

1. Hear and understand from the employee how work has gone over the past year, including an update on the progress of goals and objectives. Identify together what has gone right, those achievements in which your staff member takes pride;
2. Identify any previously unrecognized or unanticipated problems which have interfered with the employee's successful completion of projects, or which may be causing problems in day-to-day work. Discuss options and solutions for alleviating the problems. Identify together what may have gone wrong, and discuss the best way to correct it;
3. Look to the future. Both the supervisor and the employee can suggest and discuss new goals and objectives which may be of interest or appropriate for the staff member to undertake in the forthcoming year.

Even when you and your staff work in close communication, when informal feedback is given and exchanged in an open and collegial environment, it is always important to get the employee's perspective on the accomplishments of the past year. Ask your staff member to prepare for the meeting by looking over the last review, making some notes about the past year's achievements, and listing any questions he or she may have. Some performance appraisal systems formalize employee input by having staff members prepare and submit a self-evaluation document before the pre-appraisal meeting. Other systems specifically ask staff to come to their pre-appraisal meeting with a list of their successes over the past year. They are instructed to focus solely on what has gone right and how they, personally, have contributed to the library's success. This practice not only reinforces a positive tone prior to the performance appraisal, but it also ensures the supervisor will not forget to mention an achievement that is important to the employee.

Before meeting, it is a good idea for you to look over the employee's last review, since the last appraisal marks the point from which further progress is charted. As well, you may want to refresh your observations of the employee's performance by looking through the file of critical incidents and weeding out any isolated or untypical examples of performance.

During your discussions, work toward agreement on the past year's performance, and the employee's future development opportunities. What goals and objectives would your employee like to undertake next? Will these new challenges strengthen the employee's skills and abilities? Does the library benefit from these projects?

You are prepared to draft the written appraisal when you have:

- a better understanding of the employee's efforts over the past year;
- a file of previously discussed and documented observations of the employee's performance;
- any problems identified and solutions explored;
- agreement on goals and objectives for the forthcoming year.

5.6. Drafting the Written Appraisal

Theoretically, drafting the appraisal should be the easiest part of the annual review process. After all, your performance expectations have all been discussed, standards clarified, problems identified and solutions explored, and an informal agreement on future directions has been reached. All that remains is to compare behaviours to standards and determine at what level the standards have been demonstrated, add your comments and draft the new goals and objectives that you and your staff member have agreed upon.

Consider these suggestions to make the written review fair and meaningful for the employee.

Look Forward:

- remember the goal of performance appraisal: success for both the employee and the library in its community
- determine the one most important message this review should convey to the employee
- identify one or two areas of performance which, if strengthened, can help the employee move closer toward meeting his/her personal and/or career goals
- consider how the library benefits from this sharing of personal and organizational goals

Look Back:

- describe the employee's performance specifically, in terms of action and result
- know the standards and stick to the standards
- document, document, document, especially exceptionally good or less than satisfactory performance
- use the language of the form when adding your comments to reduce confusion

5.6.1.   Common Evaluation Errors

Be alert to these common evaluation errors:

- The central tendency - Rating all employees more or less the same, usually at the satisfactory level despite their actual performance. This is playing it safe; no problems to be addressed, and no accomplishments to be recognized. This is de-motivating for good performers and encourages underachievement.

- First impressions - Despite the employee's best efforts, the supervisor continually makes judgements based on a previously formed false assumption. This de-motivates good performers who feel that they cannot get ahead.

- Stereotyping - Ratings are based on opinions about a particular group, rather than on the employee's actual performance. Such discrimination is demoralizing, unethical, and illegal.

- Mirror effect - The supervisor gives higher ratings to employees who are similar to him/her, employees with whom the supervisor shares the same values, goals, background, etc. People who are less similar are given lower ratings. This evaluates the supervisor's opinion, not the employee's performance.

- Compare/contrast assessments - Evaluating an individual's overall performance in comparison to other individuals, rather than on the basis of the standards. This most often occurs when the supervisor is trying to prepare several reviews at the same time.

- Halo or horns - Some employees can do no wrong, because they do one thing right; others can do nothing right because they have done one thing wrong. The supervisor rates overall performance on the basis of exceptionally strong or weak performance in one area.

- Attribution - The supervisor attributes the employee's successes to his/her good supervisory skills; less than successful performance is the employee's fault. There are no 'wins' for the employee here.

- Negative/positive bias - Supervisors who believe that 'nobody's perfect' or want to 'leave some room for growth' give lower than earned evaluations; supervisors who want to encourage employees or to avoid hurt feelings give higher than earned ratings. This ignores the standards and is disrespectful of the honest efforts made by employees.

- Currency - Basing assessments on recent and sometimes minor events, rather than the overall performance throughout the year. This is caused by the supervisor's failure to record critical incidents diligently.

5.6.2.   The Supervisor's Comments

Your comments explain the overall rating, and describe in words the employee's performance throughout the year. Illustrate general statements with critical incidents, which show an action and result relationship. Be careful to acknowledge any employee achievements in which they take pride. Present these achievements as examples of how the employee's contributions helped to move the library toward achieving its vision, how service was improved. For example, 'Helen's story time programs are so successful that we now maintain a waiting list of families wishing to register'.

Highlight important milestones of achievement, such as reaching a particular standard, overcoming unexpected problems to accomplish an objective, achieving a goal. Use the language of the form to describe performance; use the language of the service statement and the vision to describe the results.

Identify performance weaknesses as behaviours that affect the system; describe the effects specifically. The more documentation you can provide to describe the behaviour problem, the better your employee will be able to understand what actions need improvement, when these behaviours occur and why they need to be corrected. Only include critical incidents that you have discussed previously.

5.6.3.   Draft the Work Plan

The work plan puts down on paper the agreements already negotiated during the pre-appraisal meeting. The plan includes:

- the draft of the negotiated goals and objectives for the forthcoming year, with identified time lines
- one or two areas of performance where the supervisor and the staff member will concentrate together on strengthening the employee's performance
- a list of resources required to support the employee's efforts, such as a training program, new equipment, supply help to replace an employee on a special assignment, etc.

Put the draft aside
> Put the draft appraisal aside for a few days, preferably a week, or at least a weekend. Read it again. Does the draft honestly and accurately reflect the agreements that you and your employee have made? Are the ratings, comments and critical incidents, balanced and fair? Do they accurately represent overall performance for the year?

Arrange to meet
> Once you are satisfied that the draft is an accurate reflection of the year's work, give a copy of the draft to the employee and schedule a meeting to discuss it. Allow enough time for your staff member to consider the information and prepare questions. Invite the employee to add his/her written comments.

5.7.   Discussing the Appraisal

The purpose of this meeting is to review and finalize your evaluations and comments regarding the past year's work, to discuss and consider any concerns your employee may have about the appraisal, and to reach agreement on the goals and objectives, and the work plan for the forthcoming year.

Even with the best intentions, this meeting can sometimes flounder over the use of a particular written word or phrase, or the assignment of a particular rating. People are sensitive to the difference between the verbal exchange of performance information and what is recorded in their files. For this reason, it is helpful to align written comments with the words and phrases of the appraisal form (see 5.6.2).

If a stressful session is anticipated, it can help to do some physical preparation before the meeting. Taking a quick walk, doing some deep breathing exercises, or meditating, all help to calm and relax.

Another good technique is visioning. Envision yourself in the meeting, behaving calmly, speaking carefully and unemotionally. See yourself reacting calmly to accusations, listening with care, giving helpful support and feedback. Hear yourself speaking about the behaviour, not the person, working toward a shared commitment to improvement. Imagining how you will behave in the meeting is a useful way to practice the behaviours you want to demonstrate.

Begin the meeting by establishing the agenda: to discuss and finalize the evaluation and the new goals and objectives.

As the supervisor, you will:

- go over the appraisal, section by section, and with your staff member determine areas of agreement
- identify areas of concern and your position, with supporting examples of critical incidents
- speak to your comments

The employee will:

- identify areas of concern and his/her position
- speak to his/her comments
- raise any other questions or issues s/he wants to discuss

You will both:

- work together toward a negotiated agreement on next steps, finalizing areas for improving performance, goals and objectives and budget impacts
- sign the forms

Even though you, as supervisor, are responsible for the final assessment, it is helpful to consider the written appraisal as still a draft. This leaves room for comments to be reviewed and restated in more meaningful (or less threatening) ways, for expectations to be clarified further, and for goals, objectives and deadlines to be reconsidered before being finalized. It also leaves ample space for you to clarify your understanding of events, and for your staff to clarify what you expect of them.

Occasionally, employees will refuse to sign the form. It can be helpful to explain that the signature does not indicate agreement, only that they have read and discussed the appraisal. Their objections are included in their comments. If there is a third party review process in your library, reassure the employee that the comments will be seen 'higher up'.

Trillium Public Library

Jackie has had several coaching sessions with Helen over the last year regarding Helen's service skills. While Helen had done exceptional work on developing the picture book collection and had uncovered some excellent sources for non-print materials, Helen's service and team skills continue to be unreliable. During the pre-appraisal meeting last week, Helen did not seem to take Jackie's service concerns seriously. Helen felt that there was considerable improvement and wanted this information noted in the appraisal. But, just yesterday, Jackie had had to calm an irate patron who felt that Helen had given his request short shrift.

Because Jackie suspected that Helen would be very angry about the comments and ratings on the draft appraisal, she was worried about this meeting. She had rated Helen's overall performance as 'Needs Improvement'. These were the comments she had written to support the rating:

Supervisor's Comments:
Helen has completed the goals and objectives agreed to for the past year. She has done exceptional work on the collection project and in developing and implementing the preschool story time program. The publicity and outreach Helen developed for the program has led to escalating library use by children and their families (circulation of children's materials has doubled, and library visits are up 200% in the last 6 months). The newly-refreshed non-print children's collection has proved popular with older families entertaining grandchildren (see attached letter, 1.B).

Helen has worked in a very consultative manner with her colleagues, supervisor and other community children's services providers to assure appropriate materials were added to the children's collection. An example of this was Helen's decision to add a small collection of French-language picture books. This service enhancement has been greatly appreciated (see 1.B – letters of thanks). Helen's enthusiasm for, and energetic commitment to, the board's vision and strategic plan have been an inspiration to staff and patrons.

Despite her many achievements over the past year, I have rated Helen's overall performance as "Needs Improvement". In six areas, Helen does not consistently and reliably meet the performance and service standards. (See ratings and comments under 'Flexibility and Adaptability', 'Teamwork', 'Service Orientation', 'Courtesy' and 'Approachability'). It is my experience that, when I remind Helen of the standards, behaviour improves for a while. From our discussions, I know that Helen generally tries to conform to the standards; however, as use of the library continues to grow, I must begin to see consistent, reliable performance in these problem areas.

Despite all Jackie's preparation for the meeting, she had not anticipated the barrage of accusations and anger when Helen entered the office. Jackie let Helen continue. When Helen ran out of words Jackie said: "I can see how important this appraisal is to you, and how strongly you are feeling. Please sit down. Let's take a moment. Can I get you some water? Coffee?"

At first, Helen seemed reluctant to sit, but finally agreed. Jackie brought water for herself and for Helen. Sitting comfortably, looking relaxed, Jackie asked: "Shall we go through this form together? I'd like to begin by looking at those areas where I believe we are in agreement, especially with the excellent work you have done on your goals and objectives. Shall we start there?"

With these first steps in place, Jackie began to lead Helen through the form, restating her positive and supportive comments. Jackie then began to speak to the service standards.
"As you can tell from my comments, Helen, I value the strengths you bring to the library. You continue to show through your collection skills and the popular and enthusiastically received programs, that you enjoy being involved in the changes that are making our library stronger and more important to the community. I'm wondering if I'm misunderstanding something here? As I stated on the appraisal form, and illustrated with several examples, I have seen you meet the service standards, but I don't see the appropriate behaviours demonstrated consistently. Am I right in thinking we share this concern?"

With a curt nod from Helen, Jackie continued. "It seems to me that we have discussed these incidents enough. Let's try looking at one of your many significant achievements over the past year, and see if it gives us any ideas about service behaviours which meet the standards. How did you come up with the idea to create the collection of French-language picture books?"

Helen explained that she had children from some French-immersion families in the story time program. She noticed that these families never seemed to borrow books when they visited the library. Following up, she discovered that the parents, with limited language skills, didn't feel able to read the books in the library's collection to their children at home.
Jackie asked: "Tell me exactly what you did to discover this?"

Helen answered. "Well, one afternoon when I was working on my book orders, Mr. Leclerc, you know – the new Trillium doctor - came in. He's a regular library user, and his little boy is in the story time program. When I looked up and noticed him, it occurred to me that he might be a perfect person to ask about this. You know how pleasant he is. He was very happy to talk to me. He felt that it was because they don't feel confident enough in their new language to either read to their kids, or help their kids with reading. "

Jackie said: "Helen, it was good that you took the time to follow up; that was exceptional service. But I believe you also said that you took the time to look up from the work in which you were emerged. That was service that meets my expectations. Even though time seems like such a precious commodity these days, you used your time to establish excellent relations and trust, by reaching out to an important group of Trillium residents. What would we have missed if Mr. Leclerc had been given the same service as Mr. Bruce was last August?"

From Helen's embarrassed look and hesitant smile, Jackie knew that Helen was beginning to appreciate and to understand what was expected of her, that to Jackie, service wasn't a matter of personal convenience.

It was agreed that they would meet in three months to revisit the performance ratings. They would work together on practicing behaviours that consistently meet the standards.

In the meantime, Helen was looking forward to attending a time management course being offered to municipal staff.

To see the appraisal form developed for the Trillium Public Library, go to Appendix G.

5.8. Third Party Review

If your library has two or more levels of supervision, a supervisor and a CEO, for example, the annual appraisal should be routed to the CEO as a third party reviewer, once the immediate supervisor and the employee have met and discussed. If staff members feel they are not being treated fairly, this ensures that their comments, when added to the appraisal form, are seen at a higher level. Third party review alerts higher level supervisors to employees who are having problems or who have potential for promotion, and gives the supervisor's manager the opportunity to see how well a work area is being supervised.

In libraries with fewer than two levels of supervision, it can be helpful, if more challenging, to provide an alternate third party to review performance appraisals if such a review is requested by staff. Options include: an agreed-upon mediator on an 'as needed' basis; municipal staff with Human Resources expertise; the Board's personnel committee.   While it is difficult to do so in a small library setting, it is important to assure that any staff member always has access to another opinion.

In the case of the CEO, or anyone who works directly for a board of directors, there is little recourse or opportunity to seek a third party review. Because the performance appraisal is usually conducted by a personnel committee, it is believed that this, in itself, ensures fairness and neutrality by virtue of the fact that your performance is not being appraised by any one individual.

5.9. Peer Review and 360 Degree Feedback

In recent years, there has been a move towards actively soliciting performance feedback from more directions than that of supervisor. As the workplace becomes more team-based and collaborative, and supervisory responsibilities more fluid and multi-directional, it can be argued that the formal supervisor is not always the only or the best person to provide reliable feedback to an employee. This is especially true in service organizations where the people who use the service are in an excellent position to offer feedback on the performance of a service provider.

Known alternately as **360 degree feedback** and **peer review**, these approaches to performance appraisal reflect a growing recognition that purely hierarchical workplace structures are a thing of the past, and it is no longer a simple task for any one person to accurately gauge an employee's performance. One large automobile manufacturer goes so far as to ask each and every employee to identify the five people most capable of giving them feedback on their performance. They are then directed by their supervisor or manager to speak to those people, summarize the feedback from all five directions, and draft a development plan that responds to issues raised in the feedback. Other professions, such as nursing, have implemented a system of peer review where each nurse meets with two or three colleagues whom they have asked to assess their performance. They then meet with a nurse manager, where they synthesize what they have been told and develop a personal learning plan to address issues raised by their peers.

In addition to performance feedback from more than one person, 360 degree feedback includes an assessment from subordinates on one's supervisory performance. If supervising someone is one of your responsibilities, it follows that that person might have something relevant and worthwhile to say in assessing how well you are performing.

While such approaches to performance appraisal are necessarily more complex and time-consuming than the traditional one-on-one approach, they can be an effective means of truly gauging the progress and success of both the individual and the library. To embark on such an intense undertaking every year and/or for every position may not be feasible for a small public library, but it might be worth considering the possibility of incorporating such broad-based assessment mechanisms every three or four years, at least for higher level management/supervisory positions, including the CEO.

5.10. The CEO's Performance Appraisal

Evaluating the CEO is one of the primary responsibilities of the Library Board,and is integral to the success of the Board's short- and long-term plans. Your work, like that of your staff, will benefit from an evaluation process that provides an opportunity to receive feedback, clarify expectations, and set goals. You can help your board by providing information, suggestions and guidance on developing an appropriate performance review process. While this guide is written specifically for CEOs and library supervisors, the process can be used as a basis for planning the CEO's performance appraisal. Many of the steps are relevant, including the alignment of vision, mission and service quality with performance measures, and deriving annual work objectives.

The task of appraising the performance of the CEO can be overwhelming and intimidating for a board with little or no human resources experience. In such cases, it is advisable that, before proceeding, the board seek advice from a variety of written resources, other boards, and from Southern Ontario Library Service. It is especially important to do so, if there appears to be a difference of opinion as to the performance of the CEO. There are significant legal considerations that should be understood by everyone involved in the process of documenting the performance of an employee.
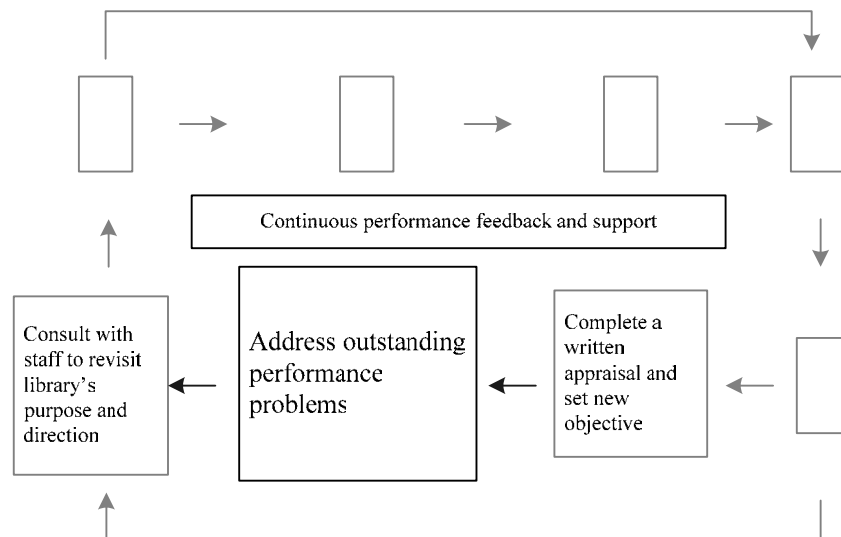
5.11. Appraising the Performance of Volunteers

Any organization that chooses to employ volunteers assumes responsibility for managing those volunteers effectively. Their individual and collective contributions should be aligned with the overall mission and direction of the organization. CEOs and library boards need to understand that there is a cost associated with running a volunteer program. It is incumbent upon you to ensure that the benefits of involving volunteers outweigh whatever costs you incur. Costs are usually in the form of significant staff time spent managing, supervising, coordinating and recognizing the efforts of volunteers.

The benefits of volunteers are maximized when the expectations of both parties are clearly communicated and well matched. The library understands why the person is volunteering, and what they intend to contribute; and the volunteer understands and is willing to meet the nature of the commitment required by the library. Some organizations prepare a written contract, to be signed by the volunteer and by the managing staff member, outlining the expectations and commitment of both parties.

While it is unreasonable to expect staff to conduct formal performance appraisals on the volunteers they supervise, it is a good practice to establish clear expectations and to provide honest feedback to volunteers on their performance. Some of the same performance standards that apply to staff may well be applicable to volunteers. Certainly, the library's mission, vision, goals and objectives should also be communicated to volunteers and their contributions aligned with the overall big picture. As well, much of the information about discussing performance will work equally well with paid staff and volunteers. (It is wise, however, to be prepared for the fact that some volunteers will be offended if their efforts are criticized, even constructively, and indignant resignations may result.)

Continuous performance feedback and support

Consult with staff to revisit library's purpose and direction

Address outstanding performance problems

Complete a written appraisal and set new objective

6. ADDRESSING ONGOING PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

Sometimes, despite your best efforts as a supervisor, an employee's performance does not improve. Large library systems might have the advantage of providing other kinds of job opportunities within the system, if it is clear that the job and the employee's skills are not a good match. However, for smaller libraries, without the advantage of a wider range of positions to offer the employee, performance problems need to be addressed and dealt with. Clearly, it is unfair to apply the performance standards differently or inconsistently across the workplace, because supervisors are unwilling to address problems.

Before beginning any disciplinary process, review the library's personnel policies to make sure that the steps outlined in board policy are followed with care. Be clear, as you begin to implement disciplinary action, that the final step in the process is release from employment.

6.1. Verify the Performance Problem

Because there are any number of reasons why staff members develop ongoing performance problems, be careful to ascertain that any ongoing unsatisfactory behaviours are not caused by health conditions or other personal concerns.

Before assuming that the problem lies with the employee, review the employee's file to assure that any unsatisfactory behaviour has been identified previously, and reasonable and consistent attempts have been made to address the gap between the standards and the employee's demonstrated behaviours. Are current and previous performance assessments fair, accurate, balanced and based on factual documentation? Consider these questions:

1. Do the standards accurately measure the quality and the quantity of the work to be performed? Are your expectations for performance reasonable and achievable, not vaguely worded or idealistic? Do the policies, regulations and procedures of the library support or hinder the employee in meeting the standards?
2. Does the employee understand the standards and how they are applied?
3. Are previous and current performance appraisals based on the employee's demonstrated behaviours, not on the supervisor's opinions or feelings?
4. Do the appraisals focus on only one or two recent incidents, overlooking the employee's overall contributions?
5. Are any gaps between the employee's behaviour and the standards for performance demonstrated accurately in the supervisor's comments and examples?
6. Is the job description current and accurate?
7. Are the behavioural issues significant or minor in terms of the overall work of the job description?
8. Are timelines for goals and objectives reasonable? Are goals aligned across the library to make certain that the support needed to complete the projects is available?
9. Have the resources required to do the job been made available? Has the employee been provided with:
   - training and the time to practice new skills?;
   - coaching, feedback and team support?;
   - equipment, budgets and spending authority?;
   - time to get the work done?
10. Have there been changes in the strategic plan, or shifts in the library's priorities, that may have delayed or replaced the employee's goals and objectives?
11. Is there ongoing discussion of performance? Do the staff member and supervisor keep each other notified on progress and problems? Have follow-up plans for improving performance been developed, agreed to and implemented? Has the supervisor made consistent and reasonable efforts to support the employee in learning new behaviours, in meeting the standards?

If performance problems have been accurately identified, and reasonable and consistent steps have been developed to improve the employee's performance, without success, you may consider implementing a process of progressive discipline.

6.2.   Progressive Discipline

The library's personnel policies should outline the procedures that are to be followed when taking disciplinary action, identifying who needs to be consulted and who has final authority to fire. As well, if a collective agreement is in place, it will contain information on the employee's rights in a disciplinary procedure.

The decision to proceed with progressive discipline should only be made when supported by board policy and a genuine willingness and capability to see the process through to completion. Embarking on the disciplinary process without ensuring the commitment to see it through is dangerous. Doing so can jeopardize the credibility of the CEO and board, and undermine the organization's ability to confront any future performance problem. If there is not a commitment to see things through to the point of release from employment, the supervisor has no choice but to put up with poor performance.

Here are some guidelines for the supervisor to follow when implementing a process of progressive discipline:

1.   Schedule a meeting with the employee, clearly identifying the purpose of the meeting.
2.   Assure that all the documentation, (the critical incidents, the appraisals, and any other supporting information) is handy.
3.   Take notes.
4.   Explain the facts: the employee's actions and the effects of the actions. State clearly that the behaviour is inappropriate.
5.   Ask for the employee's comments; understand that the comments could be emotional and defensive, but deal with the facts only.
6.   Determine what steps to take next, in light of the employee's comments. If discipline is justified, explain what action will be taken immediately, as outlined in personnel policies.
7.   Explain clearly and specifically what actions will be taken if the behaviour continues: further discipline up to, and including, release from employment.
8.   Agree to a plan for improvement, with specific benchmarks and time lines, and methods for monitoring performance clearly outlined. The employee and supervisor must sign the agreement.
9.   Follow up. Assure that all the help and support the employee needs to modify behaviour is in place.

If the unsatisfactory behaviour continues, the supervisor must continue to implement the board's progressive discipline process, meeting with the employee and clearly explaining that the behaviour is unacceptable. Make certain that the employee is aware of the consequences should the unsatisfactory behaviour continue.

6.3.   Alternatives to Progressive Discipline

In more recent years, there are some HR professionals who claim the Progressive Discipline approach is doomed to failure because it is punitive and adversarial in nature, with no real incentive or motivation for the employee to work at improving performance. Moreover, it lays responsibility for improving performance at the feet of the supervisor, rather than the employee, and is often viewed as necessary, tedious steps the supervisor must follow before firing someone. In many cases, there is no real perception, on the part of the supervisor, that change is possible or that the performance of the individual will, or can, improve.

In a survey of public sector employers, HR trainer and author, Dick Grote,[4] found that the most successful organizations were working hard to develop positive, non-punitive approaches to discipline. While some of them are not all that dissimilar from Progressive Discipline, the focus is on believing in, and bringing about, positive change, both for the individual and for the organization. Rather than warnings, the employee is issued progressive reminders, in which he or she is reminded of their commitment to meet performance standards, and is asked to agree to work towards being fully successful. In this manner, the employee is made entirely responsible for the outcome of the discipline process. If the reminders do not bring about lasting change, the employee is given a one-day paid decision–making leave. Again, it is the employee's responsibility to decide whether to change their behaviour or leave. The fact that it is a paid leave of absence is a powerful reminder that the employer is doing everything possible to assist the employee in achieving success.

6.4.   Release from Employment

With a plan for improvement underway, monitoring of the employee's behaviour, coaching, support and feedback are increased. Records of critical incidents are maintained scrupulously, along with notes from meetings with the employee. Any training needs or other barriers to successful performance are addressed.

When concerns about performance continue, it is helpful to obtain an outside opinion from a human resources specialist and/or a lawyer. This assures that the employer's case for release from employment is valid, that procedures have been followed correctly, and that documentation is accurate and with sufficient evidence to terminate employment. The human resources specialist can provide advice on process; a lawyer who practices employment law can provide advice on the library's liabilities and the validity of the library's case.

It may be helpful to know that these situations are rare. With your support, patience and guidance, nearly all employees can learn to meet your expectations.

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4 Performance Appraisal, Discipline, and Performance Management at http://www.performanceappraisal.com/ using the Tools and Resources link.

7. GETTING STARTED

Clearly, the process of performance appraisal plays a critical role in the overall success of the library, within its community, in achieving its big picture vision excellence.

It is equally clear that this process contains more than a few pitfalls or difficult areas to negotiate. Sensitivity, perseverance, and commitment to your library's vision of excellence are needed to bring all these steps together. This is likely to take considerable effort and a significant amount of time. But it is assuredly worth that investment.

The benefits to the service organization, once this large investment of time and effort has been made, will greatly outweigh the time and effort necessary for implementation. Once the process is securely in place, that is to say, after a few full cycles of the process, staff will know that the CEO is genuinely committed to maintaining the process. Staff performance in every aspect (customer service, peer interaction, communication, and buy-in to the library's vision of excellence) will be greatly enhanced. With the passage of time, staff loyalty and morale will be stronger, and the staff's comfort level will rise as they see the tangible benefits of working within the framework of goals and objectives when clearly and consistently communicated by their CEO.

It is a long process but, once started, every step taken will lead the organization that much closer to making the library's vision of excellence entirely attainable.

APPENDIX A

Creating a Picture of Excellence: Developing the Library's Vision

Not all library boards have determined a future direction for the development of their library's services. Here are just a few tips that supervisors and staff can follow to develop a unifying vision for their library:

1.   Look at the community your library is serving. Identify what has changed over the last five years or so. Look at the census, identifying how the population you serve is changing. Identify other influences on your community, such as provincial policies, new technologies or other impacts, like a plant closure, that are bringing change to your community. Consult with local planners and politicians to see if they are seeing the same changes and trends. Consult with patrons, staff and board to verify these observations. Make a list of the changes.

2.   Look at the library's statistics and identify how library use has changed over the last five years or so. Identify where demand for service has increased or decreased. Compare library use and the changes in the community. For example, if you live in a community with a growing birth rate, there may be increasing attendance at children's programs, or loans of children's material. These numbers demonstrate that the expectations of users are changing. Make a list of these changes in user demand.

3.   Look at your library as a system. See the whole operation, not just one part. Identify how these changes in the community, in the expectations of library users, change the entire library system, next year, in two years, in three years.

4.   Write the story. Describe what you want the library to look like, feel like, sound like, after these anticipated changes have occurred. Focus on the way the library will serve its community, and add the resources, staff, collections, equipment, and space, that your library will need to provide the services. Don't worry about how to implement the changes. The 'how to's' are the goals and objectives, the route to take, to achieve your picture of excellence.

5.   Test the vision. Make sure that staff, board and patrons are comfortable in the picture. It must be a picture of the future that everyone wants to support and raise funds for. Be patient. Keep working on the vision until people start relating to, and seeing themselves in, the picture.

6.   Get it approved. Supervisors, staff and board need to hear each other agree that this is the approved direction for the library to grow; without this final approval, the organization cannot be aligned.

APPENDIX B

A Promise to the Public and to the Staff: Developing a Service Statement

The service statement is a promise to the public and to the staff which all staff, through their behaviours and interactions, are expected to keep. Invite your staff to help you define this service promise. Together, identify the library's service-based values by examining:

- the unique position that your library's services occupy in your community;

- the things your library does really well, and why everyone is proud of these things;

- how members of the public feel when they come to your library; how you want people to feel when they come to your library;

- how staff feel when they come to work; how you want staff to feel when they come to work.

When you and your staff agree on the service values of your library, put them in writing. Make the statement speak simply and concisely to everyone. Review it; get agreement; get commitment.

Get it approved. By approving the service statement, board members commit to how they will deal with their staff, the spirit in which their policies will be approved, and the promise that they, as the library's governing body, are committed to upholding. Remember that, while the service statement focuses on your patrons and your community, it is also a promise to your staff.

APPENDIX C

Performance Standards

This list of performance standards is taken from the American Library Association publication, ***Evaluating library staff***, by Patricia Belcastro, pages 201-209.

1. Makes eye contact, greets others sincerely, and speaks in a friendly manner.

2. Welcomes and serves without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual preference, national origin, disability, age, ancestry, or other characteristics.

3. Acknowledges a patron's presence immediately, even if occupied.

4. Does not spend an undue amount of time or effort with one patron if another patron is waiting.

5. Takes personal responsibility for meeting patron and staff needs correctly (information and physical access to materials).

6. Does not communicate any value judgement when interacting with a patron.

7. Verifies with the patron or coworker that his or her needs have been met.

8. Implements appropriate use of technology.

9. Exhibits proper telephone use and etiquette.

10. Exhibits a cooperative team spirit.

11. Puts service above any personal activities or interests while on duty.

12. Is ready for duty at/during scheduled times.

13. Is attentive to others' complaints and, when applicable, refers the complaints to the appropriate level.

14. Takes responsibility for learning updated internal procedures.

15. Upholds library policies and established procedures.

16. Upholds the intellectual freedom of the patron.

17. Upholds all confidentiality rights of the patron.

APPENDIX D

From Service Statement to Service Standards - A work form based on the Haldimand Public Library's Service Commitment.

HALDIMAND COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
SERVICE COMMITMENT

The Library will build an innovative, efficient and accountable organization to better serve the public. User satisfaction is our primary focus, and this can best be achieved in an organization that:

➢ Values co-workers and their contributions
➢ Encourages participatory management through mutual respect and trust
➢ Promotes innovative risk-taking and visionary leadership
➢ Responds to a changing environment through learning and openness
➢ Acts in a financially responsible manner

We plan to fulfill our service commitment through:

➢ Outstanding customer service
➢ High quality staff that mirror staffing allocations found in excellent libraries across the province
➢ Library collections that meet the needs of an increasingly diverse clientele
➢ Widespread incorporation of new and emerging technologies as an integral part of overall service
➢ Convenient, inviting, and up-to-date facilities that meet the growing expectations of users for adaptability to new technologies, separate areas for children, quiet spaces for study and research, access to local history and genealogy, and designated space for meetings and programs
➢ A wide range of educational and cultural programming
➢ Active involvement in the community

APPENDIX D (continued)

The following worksheet is an example of how staff might use the library service statement as a framework for developing service standards for staff.

Column 1 lists the elements from the service statement that require action at the staffing level.
Column 2 identifies possible performance factors or those aspects of work that related to the service elements. These are areas of work on which it is important to assess staff in order to assure that the commitments made in the service statement are fulfilled.
Column 3 begins the process of drafting the standards of behaviour or actions that are demonstrated by staff whose performance is satisfactory.

Worksheet for Constructing Service Standards from Service Statement		
Column 1	**Column 2**	**Column 3**
Staff level Components of the Service Commitment	**Service Performance Factors**	**Draft Service Standards**
1. Values co-workers and their contributions	Interpersonal Skills	• Show interest by listening and commenting on in the concerns and ideas of others
2. Encourages participator management through mutual respect and trust	Interpersonal Skills	• Participates in staff meetings by sharing observations and ideas about library operations and services.
3. Responds to a changing environment through learning and openness	Professional Development	• Shows an interest and participates in training opportunities • Takes responsibilities for learning about changes in library policies and service. • Assist patrons in understanding changes in library service through positive sharing of information
4. Outstanding customer service.	Service Skills	• Is proactive in meeting the needs of patrons • Greets patrons and colleagues in a sincere manner. • Arrives for shift at stated times. • Treats patrons and colleagues with respect by giving full attention and deferring other tasks. • Seeks to understand the needs and concerns of others by asking questions. • Does not communicate any value judgement when interacting with patrons and colleagues.
5.		•
6.		•

APPENDIX E

Ottawa Public Library: Employee Performance Evaluation Report for Permanent Employees[5]

Eligible for annual increment	❒	Progression in classification	❒
Employee name:		Date appointed:	
Position number/classification:		Period covered:	
Dept/Branch:		Return by:	

RATING GUIDE	
Does not meet standard (must be substantiated by specific examples)	•does not meet job requirements frequently or consistently •has not responded to counselling •requires close supervision and direction •has shown lack of desire or ability to improve
Meets standard	•fulfills job requirements •tasks are accomplished effectively with minimum supervision
Exceeds standard (must be substantiated by specific examples)	•surpasses job requirements frequently or consistently •tasks are accomplished in a highly effective manner •only general guidance is required

SECTION 1   SKILLS AND ABILITIES – ALL POSITIONS

KNOWLEDGE OF WORK	Meets standard[6]
Understanding of basic duties, resources, methods and procedures of the position. Comments:	

THOROUGHNESS/ACCURACY	Meets standard
Attention to detail and to completeness. Absence of errors in job performance. Comments:	

NEATNESS	Meets standard
Work is orderly, legible and well presented. Comments:	

COMMUNICATION	Meets standard
Ability to present, receive and interpret oral and written information. Comments.	

RELATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES	Meets standard
Ability to maintain harmonious relationships. Comments:	

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5 Ottawa Public Library is currently reviewing its performance appraisal process and anticipates revisions to this form.

6 While it looks like 'meet standard' is the only rating possible, a drop down menu provides the appraiser with three possible ratings: meets standard; does not meet standard; and exceeds standard.

APPENDIX E (Continued)

RELATIONS WITH SUPERVISORS	Meets standard
Ability to accept and support decisions and to keep supervisors informed of pertinent matters. Comments:	

JUDGEMENT	Meets standard
Ability to assess a situation and determine a correct course of action. Comments:	

ADAPTABILITY	Meets standard
Ability to learn and perform new duties efficiently and adjust to unexpected situations or new working conditions. Comments:	

INITIATIVE	Meets standard
Ability to determine that an appropriate action is required and the willingness to carry through. Comments:	

TIME MANAGEMENT	Meets standard
Effective use of time. Comments:	

STRESS MANAGEMENT	Meets standard
Ability to deal with work pressures, critical situations and difficult people without loss of composure. Comments:	

SELF-DEVELOPMENT	Meets standard
Awareness of developments in and contributions to area of expertise. Comments:	

PUNCTUALITY	Meets standard
Conformity to working hours. Proper adherence to lunch and break periods. Comments:	

SECTION 2   SKILLS AND ABILITIES – PUBLIC SERVICE ASPECTS

ABILITY TO DEAL WITH PUBLIC DEMANDS/COMPLAINTS	Meets standard
Deals with public demands and complaints in a calm, efficient and objective manner. Comments:	

APPROACHABILITY	Meets standard
Presents a friendly image. Is available and aware of the needs of the public. Comments:	

COURTESY	Meets standard
Is considerate and polite when dealing with the public. Comments:	

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	Meets standard
Develops knowledge of community needs. Comments:	

APPENDIX E (Continued)

COLLECTION KNOWLEDGE	Meets standard
Knows the materials in the section and the system. Provides prompt access to the correct information for the patron. Comments:	

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT	Meets standard
Seeks to satisfy both long and short term user needs by building a planned dynamic stock of library materials. Comments:	

SECTION 3   SKILLS AND ABILITIES – SUPERVISORY ASPECTS

PLANNING	Meets standard
Ability to effectively organize and prioritize workflow. Ability to anticipate and meet future needs. Comments:	

DECISION-MAKING	Meets standard
Analysis and thought used in arriving at decision. Comments:	

DELEGATING	Meets standard
Ability to share areas of responsibilities with employees. Comments:	

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	Meets standard
Demonstrated ability to instruct, motivate and evaluate employees. Comments:	

MANAGING RESOURCES	Meets standard
Effective use of personnel and financial resources to achieve objectives. Comments:	

APPLICATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	Meets standard
Knowledge, interpretation and ability to apply policies and procedures. Comments:	

SECTION 4   ATTENDANCE – ALL EMPLOYEES

Period from	to	Sick leave	Special sick leave
		Unpaid leave	Total
Comments:			

SECTION 5   EMPLOYEE ACHIEVEMENTS – ALL EMPLOYEES

SECTION 6 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – ALL EMPLOYEES

APPENDIX E (Continued)

SECTION 7   TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT – ALL EMPLOYEES

SECTION 8   COMMENTS

| **Immediate supervisor's comments:**
Appraiser's name: Date:

Signature: |
|---|
| **Reviewing supervisor's comments:**
Appraiser's name: Date:

Signature: |
| **Employee's comments:**
Date:
The employee' signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with the evaluation, but that the employee has read it.

Signature: |
| **Annual increment**   Approved[7]
Progression in classification   Approved
Manager's name: Date:

Signature: |

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7 A drop down menu makes other options available to the appraiser.

APPENDIX F

Trillium Public Library Employee Performance Appraisal

Employee:_____
Position: _____
Position held since: _____

Supervisor _____

Corporate
Identity
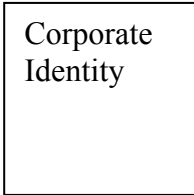
Date of last completed review: _____
Date of this review: _____
Next scheduled review: _____

I. EMPLOYEE ACHIEVEMENTS

A. Based on previous year's goals and objectives:

B. Other achievements/ personal successes:

APPENDIX F (Continued)

II. EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A. **Goals and objectives for the forthcoming year**

B. **Training and Development for the forthcoming year**

APPENDIX F (Continued)

III. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

A. Job Performance

1. Job Knowledge

Performs all parts of the job with minimum supervision.
☐ Exceptional   ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Keeps up to date on changes to routines and procedures.
☐ Exceptional   ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

2. Planning and Organizing

Plans and organizes work to complete tasks and assignments within acceptable time frames, and to assure the quality and accuracy of work.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

3. Flexibility and Adaptability

Implements changes to routines and procedures with ease.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Adjusts work routines to accommodate service priorities.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

4. Initiative and Problem Solving

Takes responsibility for identifying problems and recommending workable solutions.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Knows when to ask for help.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

APPENDIX F (Continued)

5. Accountability

Takes responsibility for safe and appropriate use and care of library resources, including materials, facilities, equipment, supplies, budgets and cash.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Takes responsibility for quality and quantity of own work.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

6. Teamwork and Co-operation

Offers help when needed.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Keeps co-workers and supervisor informed on progress of projects, comments and suggestions from patrons.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Shares information required by others for good job performance.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Accepts team decisions.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Comments:

APPENDIX F (Continued)

B. Service to Co-workers and the Public

1. Service Orientation

Gives priority to requests for service and assistance from patrons and colleagues over personal work.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

2. Courtesy and Approachability

Speaks in a friendly manner to patrons and co-workers in person and on the telephone.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Treats patrons and co-workers politely.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Acknowledges patrons waiting for service.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Demonstrates good listening skills.
☐ Exceptional ☐Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

3. Respects Patrons and Colleagues

Shows respect for co-workers and patrons, open and receptive to different points of view.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Resists value judgements about individuals and their information or reading choices.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

APPENDIX F (Continued)

4. Information and reading services

Demonstrates good knowledge of all areas of the collection.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Keeps collection knowledge up to date.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Recommends library materials and sources for information appropriate for
 individual patron needs.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Confirms that provided services have met individual needs.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

5. Commitment to the library and the community

Keeps up to date on community and library developments.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Explains policies, services and library development plans and changes in a
positive manner.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Brings any personal or community concerns about the library to the supervisor.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

6. Handling Conflict

Remains calm and objective in conflict situations.
☐ Exceptional ☐ Good solid performer ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Comments:

APPENDIX F (Continued)

IV. OVERALL PERFORMANCE

A. Overall rating:
☐ Exceptional   ☐ Good solid performer   ☐ Needs improvement   ☐ Unsatisfactory

B. Supervisor's comments:

Note to Supervisor: It is essential that the overall rating shows the culmination of the individual ratings; in other words, that the overall rating is justifiable. Comments should explain the overall rating given. Feel free to attach additional supporting documentation, if appropriate.

Signature:_____
Position:_____
Date:_____

C. Employee's comments:

I have read and discussed this appraisal.
Signature:_____
Date: _____

D. Third Party Review (if applicable):

Comments:

I have reviewed this appraisal.
Name:_____
Position:_____
Date:_____

APPENDIX G

Recommending Reading

This is a list of the print sources consulted when preparing **Coaching For Service and Success**. Some of these titles, and other publications by these authors, are available in alternate formats, such as video. Some useful web sites are also listed.

DEVELOPING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR SUCCESS

Clemmer, Jim and Art McNeil. ***The V.I.P. strategy: leadership skills for exceptional performance****.* Toronto: Key Porter Books, c1988.

> Useful background on the theory of the motivating value of vision and coaching.
> www.clemmer.net

Locke, Edwin A. and Gary P. Latham. ***Goal setting: a motivational technique that works!*** Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., c1984.

> Written by two university professors whose research focuses on organizational effectiveness, this applies their findings on how to define goals which are clear, unambiguous and motivating.   www.edwinlocke.com

Peters, Tom and Robert H. Waterman, Jr.   ***In search of excellence: lessons from America's best-run companies****.* New York: Harper & Row, c1982.

> Tom Peters started the service revolution in America by looking at service-motivated companies and defining how they focus attention on the customer. This has become the classic book on how to define organizational competence in a competitive environment. www.tompeters.com

COACHING and DISCUSSING PERFORMANCE

Bramson, Robert. ***Coping with difficult people***. Garden City, N.J.: Anchor Press, 1981.

> Complainers, wet blankets, hostile or silent people, know-it-alls, stallers, and many other problem communicators, are described in workplace settings, with useful information on how to deal with these behaviours.

Grensing-Pophal, Lin. ***Motivating today's employees***. North Vancouver: Self Counsel Press, 2002. 2d. ed. (Self-counsel business series)

> An easy to follow, practical guide with useful techniques for coaching, and for creating a healthy environment for open communication.

APPENDIX G (Continued)

Leavitt, Harold J. *Managerial psychology: an introduction to individuals, pairs and groups in organizations.* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1978. 4th ed.

The classic text on workplace behaviour.

Metz, Ruth F. ***Coaching in the library: a management strategy for achieving excellence****.* Chicago: American Library Association, c2002.

From the ALA, this practical publication gives step by step information on how to improve the culture of the workplace and ease staff relationships by modifying behaviour. Many excellent scenarios are included which illustrate good coaching techniques. Addresses some attitude problems. www.ala.org

Ross, Catherine Sheldrick and Patricia Dewdney. ***Communicating professionally: a how-to-do-it manual for library applications****.* New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., c1998 2d ed. (How-to-do-it manuals for librarians: no. 58)

This is a consistently practical step-by-step guide to all aspects of communication for library staff. Especially useful for supervisors who are training service staff in appropriate techniques for communicating with clients.

Schula, Don and Ken Blanchard. ***Everyone's a coach: you can inspire anyone to be a winner****.* New York: Harper Business, c1995.

Don Schula is a professional football coach, Ken Blanchard is a management consultant; together they apply the lessons of coaching sports to the workplace in a simple and easy to follow style.

Steinke, Peter L. ***Healthy congregations: a systems approach****.* New York: The Alban Institute, c1996.

While intended for Christian congregations, this is an excellent guide that compares well-functioning and dysfunctional groups, and how individuals perform in each system.

APPENDIX G (Continued)

APPRAISING PERFORMANCE

Belcastro, Patricia. ***Evaluating library staff: a performance appraisal system****.*
Chicago: American Library Association, 1998.

A how-to manual for library supervisors which focuses on standards and behaviours.

Grote, Richard C. *The complete guide to performance appraisal.* New York: AMACOM,
c1996.

Dick Grote is the authority on performance appraisal; this is the standard work on all
aspects of the performance appraisal process.   www.groteconsulting.com

Swan, William S. and Philip Margulies. *How to do a superior performance appraisal.*
New York: John Wiley & Sons, c199l.

Another standard work, this has especially useful information on how to ensure that
appraisals are fair, unbiased and legal.   www.swanconsultants.com

WEB SITES

www.performanceappraisal.com

This is the website of Grote Consulting and while it promotes their publications and
services it provides free access to some well written articles on performance
management. These articles are available under Tools and Resources. Unfortunately
you have to log on access the articles but this is simple to do.

www.librarysupportstaff.com/staffappraisal

This section of Library Support Staff.com includes links to information on performance
evaluation, writing performance objectives and library specific information on
performance appraisal. The Library Support Staff.com site also provides pages of
information on library competencies and job descriptions.

THE CEO'S PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

There are other resources available to aid the board with the task of CEO Appraisal.
Information on the CEO's performance appraisal is available in the ***Trustee Tip*** entitled
"*Why Conduct CEO Performance Appraisal?"* This is available from the SOLS website at
http://www.sols.org/trustee/Tips/Tip6e.html, and also in print. This topic is discussed in
greater detail in "CEO Performance Appraisal", ***Trustee 20/20*** #4, which is available only
in print from Southern Ontario Library Service.

In addition, library boards appraising their CEO for the first time are encourages to seek
guidance from a SOLS consultant.