**Setting Individualized Objectives**

**Introduction**

Supervisors should establish individual objectives, tailored to the needs and goals of each employee. The process of setting these objectives calls for a mutual effort from both the supervisor and the employee. The employee’s input is critical for getting commitment and for setting objectives that are both realistic and motivating.

**Performance Appraisal Tips:**

Counseling individuals about their performance, employment potential, and professional development poses some dangers to supervisors who don't exercise care. Consider the tips outlined below:

* Focus the discussion on clear, behavioral objectives that are in line with company needs, policies and procedures.
* Avoid making comments that can be misconstrued as oral promises. For example, stating something such as, “You’re doing a great job, I know you’ll have a long tenure here” may be construed as an implied employment contract.
* Avoid expressing opinions that could be misconstrued as biased (i.e., making unwarranted assumptions, especially about limitations).
* Be consistent in rating performance. Performance review forms should force supervisors to rate employees on specific and measurable performance dimensions.

**Setting Individual Objectives: "It Can't Be Done Alone"**

To be effective objectives must be:

1. **Observable.** Can you describe objectives in terms of quality, quantity, time, and/or visible results?
2. **Measurable.** How will you know when objectives are met? How will you know that progress is being made?
3. **Doable.** Does the employee have the ability, the training, the time, the resources, and the support to achieve the objectives?
4. **Job-related.** Are objectives related to the overall duties and responsibilities of the employee's job? Do they serve the interests of the company? Do they advance the individual's knowledge, skills, and value as an employee?
5. **Prioritized.** Which objectives are most important in meeting the needs of the company and the employee?
6. **Mutually agreed upon.** Has the employee played a role in setting objectives? Does the employee share in the commitment to achieve the objectives?
7. **Flexible.** Have you and the employee taken into account the possibility of changing conditions that would make adjustment of objectives appropriate?
8. **Written.** Have signed copies of the objectives been given to both the employee and supervisor/manager?