

Participants guide to appraisal interview role-playing

The role play has three role players:

1. The interviewer
2. The interviewee
3. The observer (could be more than one observer)

In order to make this exercise as realistic as possible we would like you to prepare for the exercise in which you will be participating.

A real-life appraisal can last more than one hour you will not have time to carry out a complete appraisal role-play. Instead you will role-play only part of the interview. The part of the interview should be related to some kind of poor job performance.

Interviewer and the interviewee

1. Carefully read the brief you are given. Remember you may not have all the information, which is similar to real life situations where it is rare for one person to know everything about a particular situation.
2. Where the brief doesn't give you sufficient details, make up your own facts and assumptions provided they do not conflict with the main brief.
3. Do not treat the exercise as a game and try to outwit your opponent – either by facts you invent or the way you act in the interview.
4. Play the role in a way that seems natural to you and consistent with the brief you have been given

Observer

1. While the interviewer and interviewee are preparing for the interview, think about the problems, read the brief, and think about the problems that might come out of the interview situation, and in ways the interviewer could avoid these problems. Do not try and pre-judge the outcome.
2. Also study the checklist for appraisals and the communication chart.
3. Sit in at the interview in a position where you are out of direct line with the role-players, but you can clearly hear and see them acting.
4. Be silent during the role-play. Take no part in the role-play.
5. Observe the role-play process in order to be able to give valuable feedback to the role-players during the discussion after the role-play
6. Make notes during the interview and use the checklist and the communication chart. Remember to note examples of both good and bad.

Post-exercise discussion

1. Start by making a thoughtful brief review of the role-play
2. Highlight the good things as well as the bad
3. Offer comments in a constructive and helpful way, illustrating them with specific examples whenever possible
4. Do not belittle any of the participants
5. Make notes for your own reference of the key things you have learnt from the role-play

CHECKLIST FOR OBSERVERS

How well was relationship established? How was it done? What was the climate like?	
What did the interviewer do to show s/he was listening?	
What technique was the interviewer using? (telling? asking questions and listening? I know best or interesting in listening to the interviewee?)	
What was the balance between the interviewer and the interviewee?	
What questions were asked? What type were they (closed/open ended)? What responses did they get?	
How was feedback on performance given? How was it taken?	
Was feedback on support from manager asked for? Was it given? How was it taken?	
Any surprises?	
How far did they reach agreement on interviewee performance and contribution to results?	
What strengths were identified? Did they agree on how to further develop these strengths?	
What problems were identified? Were they agreed by both?	
What solutions and options were identified? Were they agreed and decided?	
What was said about career? Any alternatives considered	
Were any training and development needs identified? Were any intervention agreed?	

COMMUNICATION CHART FOR APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

As the interview progresses, put ticks in appropriate boxes as the Interviewer and Interviewee gives or seeks information. At the end of the interview, roughly calculate the percentage of time each of them has devoted to giving and seeking information.

	Interviewer	Interviewee
Giving information		
% of time spent		
Seeking information		
% of time spent		

THE YOUNG SUPERVISOR – MANAGER MR PASCARUS BRIEF

General background

Your name is Mr Pascaru and you manage a clerical department employing about 120 men and women. You have 5 supervisors responsible to you, each whom is directly in charge of a group of workers. One of them, Mr Morari was appointed 3 months ago following an internal advertisement and a selection procedure in which you took part. Previously he had worked for 3 years as a computer operator followed by 2 years as a shift leader. He is young, only 25 years old, and married with one child.

Mr Moran is in charge of a group of 20 mature ladies mainly engaged on routine clerical work including the preparation of payment cheques. This is a new experience for him as he has previously worked with younger staff in computer operations.

Current situation

You are generally satisfied with Mr Morans progress. He is an able, energetic young man and has already improved the efficiency of his work sections by re-organising some of the procedures and improving the methods. You are a little uncertain however that he is adopting the right approach to his staff. Before he took over the job, you had a meeting with him in your office and among other things, advised him to start carefully, particularly bearing in mind the contrast between his existing colleagues, being his own age or younger, and his new staff most of them older than himself and with a long background in the department.

You don't have much evidence for thinking that Mr Moran might have to improve his approach to his staff. You do walk around the department most days and on several occasions you have passed by Moran when he has been talking to his staff members. You haven't been able to hear what was being said, but you could hear the tone of his voice being sharp and see the expression of the face of his staff members looking upset. You have also over-heard conversations between his staff members where his name has been mentioned in connection with bad attitudes. You have tried to keep an eye on this situation and have come to the conclusion that Mr Moran may be creating friction with some of his staff.

The other evidence was supplied by an audit clerk. You always make a point of talking to him for a moment when you pass by. The other day he was mentioning that "young Mr Moran wants to watch his step or he will get a swollen head". You don't like listening to tales, but you couldn't stop the audit clerk. He said that a week ago he had incorrectly rejected a couple of cheques that Mr Moran had been around at the time and had pointed out this to him.

You understood that the audit clerk did not object to being corrected when making mistakes, but he felt that Mr Moran had been very undiplomatic in the way he had done so. You are afraid that bad feelings may be building up against Moran throughout the department and that this might come to affect the output.

This is the major problem you want to raise with Mr Moran in the appraisal interview now due. You don't think he has done any real harm yet but you are anxious to prevent any difficulties arising in the future. You also know that Mr Moran might take offence, and that if you can put him on the right track now, he will be a valuable supervisor in the future.

THE YOUNG SUPERVISOR – MR MORANS BRIEF

Personal details

Your name is Mr Moran and you are 25 years old, married with one child. You have worked in this Department for 5 years; 3 of them as a computer operator and 2 of them as a shift leader. Three months ago you were appointed as a supervisor for a group of 20 mature ladies, who were engaged in Mr Pascarus department on routine clerical work including preparation of payment cheques. This is the first time that you have worked with older people, being used to work with young staff operating computers but you are ambitious to get on and determined to succeed. At the same time you are a little sensitive to criticism.

Current situation

The ages of your staff members vary from 28 to 55 and most of them are nearer the top of the range. Before you took over Mr Pascarus had a talk with you and amongst other things, advised you to be sensitive at the start – bearing in mind the contrast between your computer room colleagues and your new staff. You were naturally a little concerned yourself at the beginning, but you were pleasantly surprised by the fact that it has not seemed as difficult as you imagined it would be. You have at least managed to keep control of your staff.

You have re-organised some of the procedures to eliminate bottlenecks and introduced some new methods. These changes have improved efficiency. Further grounds for your confidence include:

The fact that on several occasions members of your staff have experienced difficulties, and in spite of you being quite new in the setup, you have managed to spot the difficulty and help them sort it all out. You know yourself to be a quick thinker and this has helped you considerably.

There is an audit clerk in your section, however not responsible to either you or your manager, but to the Head of Internal Audit. He is a long serving member of the department and is 48 years of age. About a fortnight ago he rejected a couple of cheques. You happened to be there at the time, and when you looked at the calculations, they seemed perfect to you. You showed them to the audit clerk, and after a brief discussion he agreed he had made a mistake and passed them.

In fact, generally you feel you have cause to be pleased with the way things have gone for you and you are looking forward to the performance appraisal.