

How to Appeal an Unsatisfactory Performance Appraisal

by Ruth Mayhew - Updated September 26, 2017



Many employees dread facing another annual performance appraisal, yet they hope for the best and are anxious to learn the amount of a salary increase or bonus. Supervisors and managers, too, put off this annual event because it requires candid feedback about employee performance which sometimes ends in confusion or disappointment. When you receive an unsatisfactory performance appraisal, and feel the evaluation of your job performance is unfair, seek information about appealing the evaluation.

State your intention to appeal what you feel is an unsatisfactory performance appraisal. Upon learning your intentions, your supervisor may give you an opportunity to explain why you think your

performance evaluation is unfair. Remain calm and state your reasons in a nonconfrontational manner.

Review your employee handbook for company policy on appealing a performance appraisal. Request a copy of your employment file; your handbook should explain the process for obtaining a copy of your personnel record.

The federal government developed its appeals process in 1940 with the Ramspeck Act, which: "Directed establishment of independent Boards of Review to decide rating appeals in each agency." In 1978, the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act stated: "Agencies required to develop appraisal systems for all Federal employees." Many private sector employers develop written procedures for appealing performance appraisals.

Photocopy the performance appraisal to use as a working copy for your draft. Compare your previous years' performance appraisals to the current one, and review all performance-related materials in your employment file. If your employer doesn't have an appeals form, prepare your draft in letter form or search online for an example appeals form.

Compose a letter stating reasons you feel the performance appraisal is unfair; provide concrete examples of job performance that illustrate your comparisons. Make a line-by-line comparison of previous appraisals to the current one. Give examples showing that your performance meets or exceeds performance standards; point out the absence of any warning notices or disciplinary forms regarding your performance from year to year. Finalize your appeal, attach copies of pertinent documents and practice articulating your appeals statement. You want to be able to state your case clearly and confidently to HR and your supervisor, if necessary.

Schedule a meeting with a human resources staff member. In matters related to performance, your HR contact may be an employee relations specialist or the HR manager. Explain your performance appraisal outcome and the reasons on which you base your appeal. The HR staff member may schedule a meeting with your supervisor or the next level of management to review your appeal. In "Legal Guidelines for Associations for Conducting Employee Evaluations and Performance Appraisals," attorney Maurice Baskin advises employers that: "Giving the employee a right to appeal his performance appraisal to a higher level of supervision enhances the employee's perception of the job evaluation process as fair and promotes good employee relations, so long as the higher level review is not a "pro-forma" review."

Tips

- Regardless of the outcome, show your appreciation to all the parties involved in the appeal and commit to performing your job duties that meet or exceed expectations so you'll receive a better appraisal next year.

References

- United Nations, Joint Appeals Board: The Appeals Process
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management: Chronology of Employee Performance Management in the Federal Government
- American Society for Association Executives: Legal Guidelines for Associations for Conducting Employee Evaluations and Performance Appraisals

Resources

- American Society for Training & Development: Spotlight
- Society for Human Resource Management: Latest News
- National Human Resources Association: Home
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Home
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management: Performance Management Practitioner Series, Pass/Fail Assessment: An Overview

About the Author

Ruth Mayhew has been writing since the mid-1980s, and she has been an HR subject matter expert since 1995. Her work appears in "The Multi-Generational Workforce in the Health Care Industry," and she has been cited in numerous publications, including journals and textbooks that focus on human resources management practices. She holds a Master of Arts in sociology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Ruth resides in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

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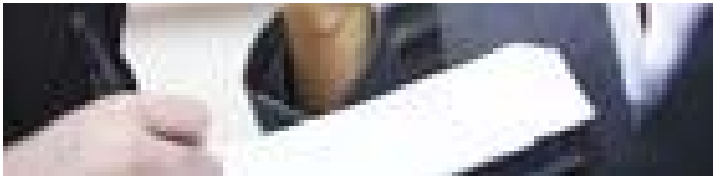


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