

Self-assessment in performance appraisals: What works and what doesn't

Author: Kudzai Derera . March 2021

No part of a performance appraisal is as overwhelming for employees as the self-assessment portion, which they must do on their own. A self-assessment can alter the direction of one's career hopefully for the better, but sometimes for the worse especially if the boss starts to doubt the employee's ability to self-evaluate. The majority of people have trouble accurately portraying their work results. It is difficult to be objective about yourself, even more, difficult to set aside time to perform a thorough review, and even more difficult to know what responses would help you advance your career. Measuring your job output necessitates a well-thought-out approach.

Adobe, which ditched conventional performance assessments in 2012, found that 59% of those surveyed accepted that performance reviews have little effect on how they do their job in a 2017 analysis of 1,500 office employees. Not only are performance reviews a source of frustration, but they may also be a source of trauma. According to the same [Adobe report](#), 22% of office employees have cried after getting a critique. Employee performance reviews may be performed in several ways, including written records or in-person interviews. There are various choices, and most companies tailor their processes to their goals and community.

For businesses involved in employee satisfaction and engagement, performance assessments serve many objectives and make good business sense. Regular employee input, according to a [Gallup report](#), decreases turnover rates by 14.9%. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, companies such as Google delayed their performance reviews for six months until COVID-19 is hopefully under control. Similar action has been done by Facebook which gave all its employees an extra \$1,000 in their paychecks, along with a universal "exceeds expectations" review.

Employee self-assessment

Employees write and email self-assessments to HR or their bosses before the actual assessment meeting. Self-assessments show the employees how they see themselves in the company's system and community. Self-assessments often encourage one to express his/her views on their work, priorities, and desired responsibilities. Companies with successful performance appraisal systems use self-assessments for two purposes, according to John Reed of [Robert Half Technology](#):

- To ensure that workers set aside time to assess their performance;
- To help supervisors get a sense of whether an employee has an accurate understanding of their influence in the workplace.

The self-assessment is an essential part of performance evaluation because it is an opportunity for one to

assess his/her achievements. The employee owns the performance appraisal. He/she should look across the past year and tell his/her manager what he/she has done and the areas they would like to focus on. The primary objective of a performance assessment is to facilitate contact between the manager and his/her reporting staff members about job performance. Furthermore, the performance assessment conference is an excellent opportunity to discuss:

- The quality and quantity of work done during the assessment period.
- The quarterly or review cycle market objectives
- The performance enhancement and improvement priorities
- The next steps in one's work and career for personal and professional growth.

An employee may use self-evaluation to focus on their success at work. Self-evaluations are normally expected every year. Employees compose and send an email or paper detailing their professional achievements, failures, and development over the previous year. Individuals are forced to be thoughtful, self-aware, and reflective as a result of their self-evaluations. Self-evaluations empower people to be thoughtful, self-aware, and insightful, and they also inspire staff to enhance their results.

Employee performance self-assessment

As the name implies, self-assessment is the method by which an employee measures his or her results. Employees are given the ability to evaluate their performance and assess their strengths and weaknesses as part of this process. They will recognise areas for change and make a list of their achievements for the year this way. While most employees consider the self-assessment process to be the most feared and monotonous job, it is one of the most robust processes, and its incorporation into an enterprise can offer tremendous benefits if performed correctly.

The following are some of the reasons why the self-assessment is so important in today's high-flux organization structure:

- **A sense of motivation** – When employees are allowed to self-evaluate they feel empowered. They realize that their opinions do matter and is taken into consideration during performance review discussions. Each employee has active participation in the performance review process. This is also a good time to identify motivated employees according to the quality of goals set by themselves and their self-evaluations. A motivated workforce eventually yields a better output which is beneficial to the growth of an organization.
- **Ownership of work** – For starters it gives them ownership of their work. It makes them more accountable for their actions. It takes the employee from being a passive observer to an active participant in the review process. Managers should take it as an opportunity to show their employees that their opinions are taken seriously.
- **Healthy employer-employee relationship** – Self- assessments help in improving employer-employee relations in the workplace. Self- assessments initiate an engaging and continuous conversation between employer and employees. Hence, there is no chance of conflict between employer and employee.
- **Two-way communication** – Performance management works best when there is two-way

communication between the manager and the employee. This is often overlooked in their day to day interactions. Self- assessments can formalize this interaction to a great extent. Self- assessment process paves way for two-way communication between employer and employee. This helps in revealing the overall performance of employees. It gives deeper insights and a clear picture of employees' accomplishments as well as weaknesses in certain areas.

- **Eliminates discrepancies** – Managers always have a different perspective than the employee. Even managers who work closely with their teams cannot always see the employee's side of the story. This is why sometimes managers are caught off-guard during performance review meetings where she and her employer have a completely different perception of her performance. Since self-assessments provide a complete picture of employees strengths and weakness it helps in removing discrepancies if any. Both employer and employee match their records to ensure that all accomplishments and drawbacks are taken into consideration during the final performance review. Therefore it eliminates the chances of disparity.
- **Career growth** – While performing self-assessment employees get to know their strengths and weaknesses. They identify the areas in which they are weak and need improvements. The training needs are revealed. They can also list down the roles which they enjoyed, projects they loved doing, future preferences. These inputs can be provided to managers for better career prospects. Self-assessment is an opportunity for the employee not only to tell his boss about his achievements but also problems that he is facing and what he requires from the management to perform better. Even if self-assessments do not have any impact on compensation, they can certainly help the employee grow.

To sum it all up as an employee, take a look at the most recent self-assessment and remember how the management reacted to it. If the management's response was less than positive, maybe you should reconsider and avoid making the same mistakes this time. Focus on the positive aspects of your results and structure your self-evaluation according to the company's guidelines. Instead of dwelling on your shortcomings, speak about the places that you need to improve, and maybe even order some preparation. To ace the performance assessment, follow the advice below:

1. Ask your manager what the appraisal is for

Before you begin, inquire as to what your boss plans to do with it. Will it have a big effect on your rating? Will it be used to determine whether or not you get a raise or promotion? Or will it be revealed to other executives and managers? When you write the self-review, you'll have a clearer picture of what you want to achieve.

2. Talk about your accomplishments

Instead of dwelling on your shortcomings, you should continue to reflect on your successes. However, don't exaggerate your achievements or diminish your accomplishments. Make a list of the goals you were given and how well you achieved them. Don't be afraid to go into depth with your examples.

3. Acknowledge your mistakes

Accept responsibility for your errors. But don't give them a noose in which to hang you. Do not keep someone accountable for your mistakes. Put a twist on it that says, "I'd like to grow more." Tell them about the areas in which you want to change. You may also ask the organization for extra instruction.

4. Keep them focused

Define what role you were in, what the company expected of you in that role, and how you delivered on that pledge. If you didn't achieve any of your goals this year, talk about how you expect to better next year.

5. Be professional

Make sure there are no spelling errors and that the text is written in a professional tone. Exaggerate neither your victories nor your defeats. It must be straightforward and well-balanced.

6. Ask for what you need

If there are aspects of your work that you are more interested in, inquire about how you can become more involved in those areas in the coming year. You may apply to be included in such meetings or request funding to attend a course that will help the organization in the future.

Kudzai Derera is a Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a management and human resources consulting firm.

LinkedIn: <https://zw.linkedin.com/in/kudzaidererera>

Phone: +263 242 481946-48/481950

Email: kudzai@ipccconsultants.com

Main Website: www.ipccconsultants.com

<https://thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/Self-assessment-In-Performance-Appraisals-What-Works-And-What-Doesnt>