

Annual Performance Appraisals Are Replaced With the Coaching and Leadership of Employees

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The annual performance appraisal traditionally used by many Human Resource departments is a formal evaluation of an employee to discuss the effectiveness of the employee's performance. Significant changes in Human Resource practices are finding annual performance reviews to be outdated and questionable. Delayed feedback on an employee's performance on an annual basis makes it difficult to bring forth corrective measures. While annual appraisals were acceptable in the past, today's workforce has grown accustomed to instant feedback; requires continual communication from all levels of management, and thrives on continual recognition. This paper will explore a coaching and leadership approach applied to employee relations and appraisals that focuses on employee development through support, encouragement, and guidance towards career goals and objectives.

Keywords: millennials, net generational, transformational

INTRODUCTION

An annual performance appraisal is the formal evaluation of an employee to discuss the effectiveness of an employee's performance. HR practices have changed; annual reviews are proving to be outdated and questionable. Delayed feedback on an employee's performance on an annual basis is not effective, making it near impossible to bring forth corrective measures. Traditionally, annual appraisals were acceptable because the workforce did not have access to employment attorneys and most likely not aware of their rights. New Age employees are well aware of legal compliances' that guide employers from lawsuits. These New Age workers have grown accustomed to instant feedback, require continual communication from all levels, including continual recognition. This paper will explore the coaching and leadership approach applied to employee relations and appraisals.

Key Terms:

- Millennials
- Net Generational

- Transformational

THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Our technological age consisting of communication such as social media, Facebook, Tweets, and Instagram's, resulting in instant feedback. Employees are now expecting the same type of feedback in the workplace. Millennials currently make up more than a third of the global workforce and that number is expected to increase to one out of every two in the not too distant future. The Net Generation, "is now the foundation for the next three decades of employment and leadership," according to Randall Hansen, founder of Quintessential Careers. Millennials are entering the workforce by the millions and have grown up with technology and an optimistic global mindset. Brad Karsh and Courtney Templin, defined Millennials from a social media point of view and telltale tweets. "They are the new scrutinizers". • "They look for corporate integrity and openness when deciding what to buy and where to work". • "The Net Gen wants entertainment and play in their work, education, and social life". • "They are the collaboration and relationship generation". • "The Net Gen has a need for speed - and just not in video games". • "They are the innovators (Karsh, Templin, 2013): The Net Generation, "is now the foundation for the next three decades of employment and leadership," according to Randall Hansen, founder of Quintessential Careers. Millennials are entering the workforce by the millions and have grown up with technology and an optimistic global mindset. Brad Karsh and Courtney Templin, defined Millennials from a social media point of view and telltale tweets (Karsh, Templin, 2013): The Millennial generation requires instant feedback. No longer do millennials entering the workforce expect to spend their entire career working for the same company, as the baby boomer generation once did. It has become a Human Resources norm to see this pattern of individuals move from job to job. Millennials no longer have the allure of the fat pension checks after working for 30 plus years at the same company, pensions have nearly vanished and have been replaced with 401(k)'s. The 401(k)'s are defined contributions plans that the worker sets aside a set amount each paycheck and invests, these plans are portable and can be moved to a different company or brokerage. Millennials are highly mobile and are not necessarily seeking stability in their careers, they expect to be laid off at some time in their career. The annual performance appraisal is simply too slow and lacks a career path the millennial can latch onto. Businesses must understand how to retain their employees and ongoing coaching may play a large part (Mosca & DeJesus, 2015).

Defining the Coaching Components

The role of the coach is one who sets goals and assists employees to grow and improve their job competence. A good coach should coach his or her employees to reach desired performance levels. The coach helps the employee implement performance plans by providing praise, constant counseling, and constructive criticism when applicable. In order to keep employees in the direction of better performance, coaching becomes frequent, applying the following: They are always gathering information on employee's competence, willing to discuss areas of improvement, help with corrective actions, and constantly reviewing the employee's plan's for implementation (Shore, 1986). The coaches main objective is to always be available when needed, to spot weaknesses, encourage, and motivate. This can be accomplished if the coach is engaged on a day-to-day basis using the following components.

Clarifying the Expected Performance

This component is a part of the job competence cycle and begins with the identification of important aspects relating to the employee's job. At this stage, it becomes critical to clarify the expected performance levels for important jobs and related tasks. The use of a written job description at this point becomes helpful for job analysis and clarification of standards. The job description not only describes important aspects of the job but includes what needs to be done. A good coach would use standards that have been established and accepted by both coach and employee. All the mentioned processes are part of a good evaluation of job performance.

Evaluating Job Performance

This is to measure the adequacy of an employee's competence. This is accomplished by comparing actual performance to previously established performance agreed-upon standards. Note that the coach and the employee establish standards, and then reach an agreement as to how the task is to be accomplished. This is unlike traditional methods whereby subjective impressions were used for the evaluation as with annual performance appraisals however. As a result, the employees are less defensive during the evaluation process because their own ratings are included with the coaches.

A good coach would minimize the authoritarian character of the evaluation interview by allowing for participation as equals. Both parties need to be prepared for the interview by determining concerns and issues beforehand. This encourages employees to engage in the conversation and minimize threats to their esteem. In addition, the coach would focus only on important performance changes that increase success. In the long term, this approach of coaching employees rather than directing them will lead to better working relationships.

According to Forray, employees in high quality, trusting relationships with their managers received higher performance evaluations (Forray, 1995). These employees seem to perform better. Those employees without quality relationships may not be evaluated as high because the manager may feel they do not have an influence on them. The performance of those employees seems to be on a lower scale.

Coaching a Method of Employee Development

Managers can create satisfied, productive, and knowledgeable work teams, by engaging in development activities. Why? Employees actually learn to perform better in the workplace and then want to assume positions of greater responsibility. As a result of self-motivation individual employees and the organization benefit. However, it must be realized that employee development is an ongoing process of increasing job competence, while managers foster the employees' career growth. It has been found that employee development programs can strongly influence career growth and job performance. The proposal here is to use coaching as a development strategy [Shore, 1986]. Coaching as opposed to managing could be the wave of the future. According to Kiechel [1991], the term "Boss" is a part of the past. He claims the term drags with Neanderthal baggage, brutish images of people ordered around, chewed out, or employees being labeled as subordinates. He points out that in the eighties the term "Leader" had its biggest impact. The term implied a manager had "Visionary" and "Transformational Abilities". However, when the term "Leader" is analyzed one could perceive it to imply that employees are, of course, followers. As one Washington University professor William Bottom termed it: "We need to function more as coaches and less as dictators. The managers' jobs are changing and their skill requirements are changing as well." Professor J. DuBrin at Rochester Institute of Technology stated: "People have more respect for a coach than they do for any other authority figure, perhaps it's because athletics are so deified in our culture."

Organizations have been through downsizing, restructuring, and other structural changes, leaving them with less help and more work. The coach of the future will need to be better at team building and the empowerment of employees who want to be part of the action. Currently, some strategists say that there is a hot new trend that will shape corporate America for the years to come, says Betsy Wiesendanger. She points out that theories such as time and motion were to be seriously considered as a means of managing work. Then came: reengineering, total quality management, and more currently "Business Psychology" [Wiesendanger, 1995]. It seems that with all of these management theories the manager of the future might well learn a thing or two from a good coach in order to develop efficient teams of employees. Therefore, upper-level management must consider viewing these issues from a human resource perspective and help managers to council and coach employees. According to Lukaszewski [1988], the human resource perspective is for the organization to develop managers who are complete thinkers. The coach can take on the role of the complete thinker when he or she is the facilitator and counselor who never identifies a problem without offering options and solutions. A complete thinker must be trained to exhibit five attributes. These attributes include the ability to identify, describe and interpret, forecast outcomes, recommend, and then test specific ideas, regardless of the problem or situation. Effective coaching entails more than merely providing data and facts, it requires volunteering information, stepping aside and being

available for assistance. In today's market place successful organizations incorporate cooperation among all of their disciplines. When one thinks about an approach such as coaching it requires a great deal of employee development and counseling. To that end, the coaching approach could prove to be successful. So what is the coaching method? It is an attempt to improve effectiveness so that managers and supervisors can hone their abilities to give and receive feedback. Coaching requires focusing on positives, not negatives. The hypotheses of this paper are that coaching can foster positive feedback and improve performance by Stating what is being observed, describing your feelings about an employee's performance, explain the impact of the performance, solicit understanding between the manager and employee on what is expected, make a suggestion for improvement, and reinforce support.

Effect of Leadership and Coaching on Productivity

What makes a good leader? Is it someone that gives you clear-orders and leaves you to obey them? Is it someone who makes you want to do your best? What about a leader makes you want to work hard? Long term research has been aimed at answering questions similar to these. The topic of leadership and coaching is of exceptional importance because of the large role leaders' play in ensuring a productive work environment in nearly all walks of life. The purpose of this is to discuss previous research on leadership styles, subordinate personalities which can be defined as those people under the leadership, and proximity of the leader's effect on productivity in the workplace.

Leadership and Coaching Styles

When it comes to leading there are many diverse techniques or styles that different leaders fall into. These different leadership styles vary in how employees respond to them in terms of their effectiveness. One study that began to illustrate some of these differences compares employee responses to autocratic leadership, a style that stresses strict obedience over personal freedom and compared to their responses of democratic leadership where subordinates have more freedom (Shaw, 1955). Participants were randomly exposed to one of the two leadership types and asked to complete a series of questions. After they completed the questions the participants were asked to report how much they enjoyed the experience. The results of this study showed that participants exposed to autocratic leadership completed the question in less time and made few mistakes. However, participants exposed to this style also reported significantly less enjoyment of their job compared to those exposed to democratic leadership. This study shows how two opposite leadership styles can have both positive and negative effects on participants depending on the situation.

With that in mind, research has also shown participant groups to support leaders who are -not specifically one style all of the time but rather adapt to individual situations (Aldoory & Toth, 2004). This study introduces two additional styles of leadership, transactional and transformation. Transactional leadership is based on the exchange of rewards between leader and subordinate based on effort and productivity. Transformational leadership is based on a leader developed a vision that they encourage subordinates to follow. The results of this study show transformational leadership to be more effective in an inconsistent ever-changing environment whereas inconsistent stable environment transactional leadership is more effective. This study concludes that the most effective leaders adapt to the situation they are presented with. An additional study carried these two leadership styles to a military setting (Masi & Cooke, 2000). As hypothesized, transformational leadership was more effective in terms of motivation compared to transactional leadership. Transformational leadership also produced greater quality and productivity.

Elements such as efficiency and satisfaction were tested across three leadership styles in the timeless experiment comparing autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). This study tested five groups of 10-11-year-old boys each led by a different type of leader. Autocratic leaders completely decided on group tasks accepting no ideas from the group. The democratic leader openly discussed plans for the upcoming tasks with their entire group. The laissez-faire leaders left the group to entirely run itself and gave no input whatsoever. Results showed that the autocratic and democratic led groups spent more time working on their assigned tasks compared to the laissez-faire led the group. The

autocratic led group displayed significantly more aggression and reliance on the leader compared to the other two groups. Democratic-led groups tended to have higher morale and were more group orientated.

However, interestingly authoritarian led participants who did not respond to their leader aggressively were the highest in productivity (74%) compared to the other groups. This study laid the foundation for leadership research as it tested the effects of different leadership styles on subordinate productivity. Nevertheless, we know today that other factors exist that affect subordinate productivity beyond the style of our leader. The personality of the subordinate also plays a critical role in effective productivity.

Research has indicated there seems to be a disconnect from what employees want to be compared to what the managers of the company believes is helpful. Wakefield Research conducted a study to see how the businesses viewed annual performances. It was noted that 94% of executives believed their employees were satisfied with the company's performance review process. However, the majority of employees felt the process was outdated (61 percent) because it's too generic (22 percent) or too infrequent (6 percent), and often incomplete (62 percent). Many employees feel the annual performance appraisal is presented historical data with information that is essentially outdated (Growth Divide: Employee vs. Manager Expectations).

The continuous performance appraisal allows the managing leader to address the employee's mistakes and development opportunities in real-time. This essentially provides 'coaching' towards the employees. Just as a coach for a sports team provides instant feedback during a practice, the managing leader should provide feedback on a continual process, essentially molding the employee into a productive contributing member of the company. A sports coach would not give you feedback at the end of the season. An individual needs to know how they are doing as things are happening. Continuous coaching would allow employees to make necessary changes in their work. This approach can also provide management the opportunity to identify and train viable employees for promotable openings, rather than waiting a whole year to have these discussions. From another perspective, should there be a problem employee, it would be beneficial to coach this person sooner rather than at a later date. Providing feedback will let them know where they stand and they can work on improvements needed right away. If there is a need to discipline that can be addressed immediately. That said, if termination becomes a necessary solution, immediate attention prevents other employees from turning problematic and the difficult employee is removed from the work environment.

HR professionals are becoming more aware of continuous feedback and the millennial generation is pursuing these changes. Millennials and the upcoming Z generation perform more effectively when coached by leaders who provide constant feedback. In addition, need to be told how good of a job they are doing. In reality, this limiting belief is only holding back the necessary progress of employee evaluations. The reason millennials desire the coaching leader approach, and HR professionals are paying attention, is because Millennials and Z's will make up 50% of the workforce by 2020s (QuercusApp, 2017). Millennials desire continuous feedback not because they were given participation trophies as kids but for a myriad of reasons such as; it is a more comfortable system because of the technology that they have grown up with, it creates an ongoing dialogue which can help their career, it helps clarify uncertainty, and it helps identify problems early enough to be rectified (Hearn, 2018). Millennial's desire to be the best they can be at their job is not only beneficial to their own personal work-life balance but is extremely beneficial to the companies themselves. One of the trends that continuous feedback helps counter is the trend of high turnover with millennials. Turnover can be extremely costly, in fact, "Gallop estimates that millennial turnover already cost the economy a staggering \$30.5 billion annually (QuercusApp, 2017)." The argument that continuous feedback can be costly and time-consuming is easily dispelled when looking at the turnover costs. It is also important to note that companies, such as Adobe, that have implemented continuous feedback models have seen a decrease in turnover numbers (Quercus App, 2017). When looking closely at the common detractors of continuous feedback, it seems like the benefits greatly outweigh the negatives, the speed at which companies decide to implement these systems effectively seems to be an indicator of the direction of the company's future.

One such company that has moved to a continual approach is Adobe. Not only was Adobe spending eighty thousand manager hours conducting annual performance appraisal, but many employees reacted to their performance review by taking their talent elsewhere. Adobe developed 'Check-In', which became

Adobe's new mode of continuous performance management. The Check-In tool has a minimal structure and no tracking or paperwork the tool focuses on three core areas; quarterly goals and expectations, regular feedback, and career development and growth. The goal of this tool is to review contributions, reward accomplishments, and receive feedback. These conversations were not tied to compensation. The annual Rewards Check-in provides compensation based on employees' performance, their impact on the business, the relative scarcity of their skills, and market conditions rather than forced-distribution stack rankings (Why Adobe Killed Performance Reviews | Measure What Matters).

Another company that has moved to continuous performance appraisal is Patagonia. Patagonia is a company that sells high-performance clothing for outdoors and had just experienced three straight years of double-digit brick-and-mortar store growth. Dean Carter the former chief human resource officer at Sears Holdings, brought with him the idea of a continuous appraisal process. Dean Carter said "Everything about Patagonia's culture is based on irreverence and the non-traditional and non-conventional, so I was really surprised to see this extremely hierarchical, traditional approach to performance management" he felt that implementing the continuous performance appraisal was the way to the future and bet his job on it. Instead of changing everything at once Carter focused first on employees having quarterly, employee-led conversations with their managers. Next Carter's team focused on how to give and receive feedback. Eventually, Carter noticed a cascading effect take place as once an employee was asked for feedback that the employee was three times more likely to ask people for feedback on his or her performance. These employees that received feedback then followed up with in-person conversations and were able to improve upon their performance immediately rather than waiting until the annual performance review. While the continuous appraisal was not mandatory at Patagonia, the employees that participated saw a 6% increase in their bonus (Is Continuous Feedback the New Normal).

Another example of continuous feedback that has become a cautionary tale is that of the late Enron's peer "rank and yank" system of appraisal. While the benefits to both company and employee are valid, in Enron's case it was an animal that not only became a toxic element to an already dysfunctional corporate culture, but it was a shock to the system to some employees. A former Enron executive Allan Sommer, who was lured from a blue-chip firm to Enron found their system of continuous peer evaluation alarming. He is on record saying that the most striking feature was "rank and yank," a peer-evaluation plan used by many companies but heightened within the Enron way of life (Kolker, 2002).

At Enron, the system was done by having employees periodically rank their colleagues into three tiers with the top tier reaping big bonuses and opportunities, the second tier aspiring to reach the first and the bottom tier simply losing their jobs. Sommer describes how things went terribly wrong with Enron's top brass encouraging a lack of team spirit and more a cutthroat competition similar to the TV show "Survivor." "Over time it started affecting you because they were constantly challenging your values. It takes a very strong person not to cave in," said Sommer, who attends Nutter's church. "You weren't involved in unethical conduct, but it was just a matter of how we treated each other, how we abused each other in our work, how people used their positions to make people do things they wouldn't normally do (Kolker, 2002)."

The correct way to deliver continuous feedback can be a tricky matter. The way a message is delivered may be just as important as the message itself. It is human nature to have an increased negativity sensitivity when it comes to information. That is to say that negative feedback will have a much greater impact on an individual than positive feedback. If employee happiness and production go hand and hand, it is important to understand that negative feedback may be more harmful than intended. In fact, when it comes to motivating employees, 65% are primarily motivated by training and career opportunities (Denny). Proper utilization of this knowledge is much more beneficial for employers than telling employees what they are doing wrong. Research has shown that in order to counter the negative effects of negative feedback, an employee would need to receive positive feedback at a 5 to 1 ratio (Denny). This is not a factor for select employees, but related to stimuli that react in the human brain when receiving certain feedback (Marano, 2003). A strong culture of positive, constructive and continuous feedback should be the aspiration of companies hoping to get the most out of its employees while meeting their needs, creating opportunities for people to help each other succeed because it is what is best for the employee and the company.

METHOD

The authors developed a nine-question survey to ascertain performance appraisal preference amongst employed students with regards to the timing of performance appraisals and whether their place of employment uses performance appraisals or coaching and mentoring. The survey was distributed to a diverse group of students. Including graduate and undergraduate levels at Monmouth University. Graduate students were included in the study to discover if their preference toward performance appraisals were different than undergraduate students as the graduate students have presumably more experience in the workforce and having experienced multiple performance appraisals at multiple work places. The student population in the study was comprised of majors from the General Business, Communication, Healthcare, Criminal Justice, Accounting, Finance, and Marketing programs. Those participating were 52% females and 48% males, ranging in age from 21 to 32 years of age. Of that population taking part in the survey approximately 15% were not Caucasian. One-hundred and fifteen students were surveyed over one semester during the fall 2019 semester at Monmouth University.

Hypothesis

- 1- This group of young adults would prefer to be coached on a frequent basis.
- 2- They would want to be coached when they request to be coached, rather than instructed.
- 3- If their organization was equipped with technology capable of performance appraisal, such as podcasting, face to face, etc., would they have any objection to not being in a one on one environment?
- 4- Would face time be acceptable?
- 5- Would they consider performance appraisal a good way for employees and supervisors to get to know each other?

Survey Questions

- 1- At your place of employment is your performance appraisal annually Yes ____ No ____, every six months ____, every three months.
- 2- At my place of employment, we have a mentoring system. Yes ____ No ____
- 3- At my place of employment, we have a coaching system. Yes ____ No ____
- 4- I think performance appraisals should be done once a year. Yes ____ No ____ Not at all ____
- 5- I like being coached on a frequent basis. Yes ____ No ____
- 6- I like to be coached when I ask to be coached. Yes ____ No ____
- 7- I would like to be appraised if my company had the technology to help me monitor my performance. Yes ____ No ____
- 8- Would you mind if your supervisor met with you on FaceTime or similar technology for performance appraisal discussions? Yes ____ No ____ Not personal enough for me ____
- 9- Do you believe performance appraisals are good for you and your supervisor to get to know each other? Yes ____ No ____

RESULTS

Data was collected through an anonymous student survey. The survey consisted of nine questions inquiring about student preferences conserving various aspects of performance appraisals and coaching or mentoring by their employer. The results are tabulated and graphically represented below in Table 1 and Figure 1.

TABLE 1
PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS AND COACHING OR MENTORING PREFERENCES

	Responses							Not personal enough
	Yearly		6 Months	3 Months	NA	Not at all	More	
	Yes	No						
Question 1	53	46	8	5				
Percentage	47%	41%	7%	4%				
Question 2	45	70						
Percentage	39%	61%						
Question 3	42	72			1			
Percentage	37%	63%			1%			
Question 4	93	15			2	3	2	
Percentage	81%	13%			2%	3%	2%	
Question 5	81	30				4		
Percentage	77%	29%				4%		
Question 6	96	8			11			
Percentage	83%	7%			10%			
Question 7	92	22			1			
Percentage	80%	19%			1%			
Question 8	41	52						22
Percentage	36%	45%						19%
Question 9	102	13						
Percentage	89%	11%						

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