

How to write performance goals: 100 sample phrases

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Well-written performance goals help energize employees and point them in right direction. They help managers conduct more **effective performance reviews**. Here are 100 phrases to adapt, from *2600 Phrases for Setting Effective Performance Goals* by Paul Falcone as well as additional performance goal phrases that may help you to provide more useful feedback to struggling team members.



Encourage initiative

Many employees lack the initiative to take on new tasks or complete assignments without the need for micromanaging. **To encourage initiative:** “Seek ways to assume responsibilities beyond your current job description.”

Using these performance review phrases in their evaluation may spur improvement:

- Complete tasks without frequent supervision.
- Focus on the ability to think creatively.
- Complete projects without ongoing direction.
- Attend training to develop necessary planning skills.
- Discover ways to think outside the box and be more decisive.
- Learn how to adapt to stressful situations.
- Proactively learn new skills.
- Develop work prioritization skills.
- Avoid taking professional criticism poorly.
- Proactively research new work techniques or tools.

Require punctuality

Every team has at least one member who is frequently late or flaky. **To require punctuality:** “Be on time for all meetings, which shows you respect your colleagues’ time.”

Also, try these performance review phrases during an evaluation with an employee who struggles with punctuality:

- **Regularly arrive on time.**
- **Respond to correspondence and phone calls within the expected time frame.**
- Maintain production schedules.
- Meet the company standards for attendance and punctuality.
- Returns on time from breaks.

- Focus on punctuality.
- Stay on schedule to avoid disciplinary action.
- Commit to time management.
- Respect the time and responsibilities of others.
- Be reliable whenever possible.

Foster a better attitude

Some employees struggle with having an appropriate attitude at work. **To foster a better attitude:** “Ensure that your tone, body language, and other nonverbal cues convey the proper respect and attitude toward others.”

These additional performance goal phrases might help:

- Refrain from publicly criticizing coworkers.
- Maintain a positive attitude to promote productivity.
- Support team morale through the attitude displayed.
- Avoid team tension by maintaining a positive attitude.
- Welcome new employees to drive improved morale.
- Keep work and home life separate as much as possible.
- Develop skills to manage stressful situations well.
- Provide constructive criticism to coworkers.
- Cooperate with others to foster team spirit.
- Focus on solving problems.

Improve communication

To improve communication: “Anticipate what your manager will need to know and provide that information.”
For managers: “Keep team members informed of each other’s actions.”

Here are some performance review phrases to use if communication is a weakness for the employee:

- **Communicate expectations effectively.**
- **Facilitate group discussions.**
- Improve written and verbal skills.
- Focus on developing communication skills.
- Communicate thoughtfully during meetings.
- Avoid inappropriate language.
- Communicate with proper personnel regarding issues.
- Speak up in team meetings.
- Provide timely project updates.
- Avoid misunderstandings by communicating proactively.

Spur creativity

Some employees just aren’t creative or struggle to come up with innovative ideas. **To spur creativity:** “Build relationships among peers that foster collaboration and discussion of new ideas.”

Try using these phrases in employee feedback when creativity is lacking:

- Consider new ideas, particularly when your current thinking isn’t working.
- Be flexible enough to implement new concepts.

- Develop an interest in creative approaches.
- Adapt new solutions.
- Take risks, especially when there are obvious benefits.
- Try new things to increase productivity.
- Facilitate brainstorming and out of the box thinking.
- Develop innovations and new ideas.
- Bring creative ideas to fruition.
- Encourage team creativity by listening to new ideas.

Boost customer service

Employees who lack a customer service mindset can be detrimental. **To boost customer service:** “When we lose a customer, follow up to discover what we could have done differently.”

You can also try incorporating these performance goal phrases during the next review:

- Manage customer issues efficiently.
- Refrain from violating company policies when communicating with customers.
- Adapt customer service scripts when communicating.
- Avoid becoming frustrated.
- Use sales techniques to offer additional products and services.
- Be aware of customer call times.
- Escalate complex customer issues when necessary.
- Focus on building customer rapport.
- Be perseverant when solving problems.
- Support customers by actively listening.

Diversity in the workplace is more important than ever. **To nurture diversity:** “Appreciate the unique perspective, skills, and experience that each person brings to the team.”

This feedback might help encourage change:

- Make an effort to understand the perspectives of others.
- Avoid offensive jokes and disrespectful actions.
- Value diversity of thinking.
- Discourage harassment, bullying, and poor behavior.
- Participate in the implementation of diversity initiatives.
- Engage in diversity events.
- Drive positive change.
- Show empathy toward marginalized people.
- Proactively determine if current policies and procedures support diverse employees.
- Accept diverse viewpoints.

Improve planning

The ability to create and follow a plan can be learned. **To improve planning:** “Begin projects by identifying all the resources required, including staff, funding, materials, and other support.”

These performance goal phrases may help poor planner improve:

- Develop organizational skills.
- Create a course of action for projects without supervision.

- Prepare in advance for meetings.
- Complete tasks promptly.
- Meet deadlines.
- Analyze project requirements and develop strategies.
- Keep files and materials organized.
- Utilize planning tools.
- Establishes realistic strategies.
- Maintain the big-picture view and avoid getting lost in the details.

Promote better listening

Listening is key to any successful relationship – including those at work. **To promote better listening:** “Show by asking open-ended questions that you are engaged in conversations.”

You can also use these phrases in employee feedback:

- Intently listen to directions.
- Listen to and acknowledge customer feedback.
- Concentrate on discussions.
- Listen to guidance from leadership.
- Develop active listening skills.
- Be concerned with what colleagues say.
- Take the time to process what is said by others.
- Participate in conversations.
- Avoid interrupting others.
- Eliminate personal bias so discussions are not misinterpreted.

Foster leadership

Leadership qualities are needed at all levels of an organization. **To foster leadership:** “Discover the problems that prevent team members from performing at the highest possible levels.”

Use these performance review phrases to give feedback:

- Develop leadership qualities through training and self-improvement.
- Become a source of inspiration to others.
- Avoid openly criticizing team members, provide feedback privately.
- Actively reward employee achievements.
- Practice patience.
- Focus on delegating appropriate tasks.
- Attend leadership training.
- Accept and process constructive criticism.
- Avoid micromanaging your staff.
- Make decisions and commit to them.

Editor’s Note: Helping your employees write strong performance goals is extremely helpful when it comes time to sit down for **performance reviews**. The goals will help guide the appraisal and give you specific employee responsibilities and metrics to evaluate during the performance meeting.

If you’re looking for more assistance with the appraisal process, we’ve created a packet of checklists and forms to help you make the most of your reviews. **Performance Review Documents** will give you the tools you need to focus on every aspect of the **performance review**, from preparing and conducting the appraisal to following

up after it's completed.

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