

# Conduct appraisals fairly and accurately



Many supervisors are sensitive about rating their people on the basis of a generalized standard (e.g., “shows initiative”) or in terms of a numerical scale (“rate from 1 to 5”). It’s hard to pigeonhole people, especially if you have to give an unsatisfactory rating to someone you like.

That’s an understandable reluctance, but you can use these tips offered by Elwood N. Chapman in his book, *Supervisor’s Survival Kit*, to decide on ratings that accurately and fairly reflect workers’ performance.

- **Appraise work, not personality.** Use objective data such as production figures, attendance records and number of tasks handled without mistakes.
- **Evaluate according to actual contributions**, not potential.
- **Base judgment on employees' typical performance**, not one good or bad stretch during the period under review.
- **Keep various standards separate**, rather than allowing poor or excellent performance in one area to color your ratings in all areas.
- **Avoid trying to save time** by simply selecting the middle range on all factors.
- **If you must give an unsatisfactory rating**, have all the facts at your disposal, discuss the problem with the employee, inform your manager of your decision and keep an open mind about the possibility of improvement.
- **Discuss ratings openly with the employee.** Explain your position and defend it if necessary. Make it clear that you’re interested in helping everyone succeed.

## Hold an effective session

Here are several tips to help you conduct a successful appraisal session:

- **Choose a time when you can both concentrate on the discussion**—preferably not right before lunch, at the end of the day or during peak activity hours.
- **Make descriptive, specific and nonjudgmental statements** about the employee’s performance.
- **Reinforce positives** while seeking ways to improve below-standard performance.

- **Encourage the employee** to contribute ideas about how to improve.
- **Emphasize future goals** and how to reach them rather than dwelling on past activities.
- **Fulfill your responsibility** to get all the paperwork in on time.