

Press or Media Kit

***This is the second article in a series covering the elements of effective public relations.

When attempting to garner attention for your book, it is important to market your title in a way that is relevant to the audience. Many audiences will request that you send a media kit (often referred to as a press kit). Media kits are collections of material about you and your book which you package and send to representatives of the media. The media kit should promote both you and your book by including news, marketing materials, and background information. A typical media kit might include:

- A **cover letter**, personalized for the recipient. Your cover letter should introduce you and your book and very briefly explain the purpose of this contact; you might be writing to ask for a book review or to arrange for an interview, for example. Your cover letter should specifically highlight the unique benefit of your book for readers and for the audience of the media outlet you're contacting. You can supplement this with a personalized Post-it note with a short, personal message to the recipient, stuck in a conspicuous place in or on the kit.
- Relevant **press releases** and **press clippings** about you and your book. If you've published articles or interviews, be certain to include copies of those as well.
- An **author bio sheet** that contains interesting and engaging information about your background and experiences; again, you can customize this information to appeal to specific markets.
- **Sample questions and answers**, particularly if you're writing to request an interview about your book.
- A **fact sheet** about your book that lists its basic information, including the book's title, publisher, ISBN number, page count, publication date, and price.
- **Flyers, bookmarks, clipsheets** of artwork from the book, or other marketing materials used to promote your book.
- A **schedule** of appearances, book signings, and events.
- **Author portrait photo** or photos taken of you during appearances at events.
- **Review copy** of your book, when appropriate; otherwise, a sample chapter or excerpt, along with cover art. Only send review copies to contacts that can result in news stories or other media coverage. Sending review copies to bookstores, libraries, schools, and other non-media sources won't generate media coverage, and therefore isn't an efficient use of your marketing resources.
- If you aren't certain the recipient will be interested in a review copy of your book, you instead can include a **review copy request card**; recipients can return the card to you or call the number on the card to request a review copy of your book.

As you collect news clippings and quotes about your book, you can copy these and include them in your media kit. Put your kit in a simple but nice folder, and pack the information in a way that makes the material easy to look through and the smaller marketing pieces easy to find. And

again, be prepared to customize the contents of your media kit to match the market into which you're sending it.

***Adapted from *Your Voice in Demand: The AuthorHouse Guide to Marketing and Promoting Your Book* (AuthorHouse, 2005)

PRESS KIT

CHAPTER I

Introduction: According to the Experts

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS SELDOM, IF EVER, work as advertised. Appraisals do not work because they are fundamentally flawed in their design, use, and intent. They work against human nature, contain false assumptions, and are founded upon outdated theories. In fact, embedded in almost every single book on the subject is a chapter, a few pages, a table, a paragraph, or a few sentences that are essentially disclaimers. These disclaimers describe the conditions, circumstances, or occasions when performance appraisals may not work. Taken as a whole, the problems of performance appraisals cannot be overcome.

There are hundreds of books about how to do appraisals, how to do them better, or how to do them differently. Organizations are always in the process of implementing new and better systems. The new systems replace old systems that did not work as expected. The average performance appraisal system lasts only three to five years, and then the virtually endless cycle of selecting, implementing, and replacing the system is repeated. The reality is that performance appraisals as practiced in the vast majority of organizations simply do not work.

Many organizations blindly use them in a misguided attempt to motivate employees to perform better. Yet, appraisals were never designed to improve performance, only to measure and rate it.

Managers and employees dislike appraisals and everyone knows that they are not good for morale. Appraisals are known for being inaccurate and for causing fear and anger. This certainly outweighs any good that they might create. Appraisals are a prehistoric method of managing and motivating employees.

Performance appraisals were built for an industrial world. Organizations would be wise to abandon the use of this outdated system that never actually

How to Use This Book

Why You Should Buy This Book

IF YOU DREAD THE annual performance appraisal process, invest in this book. You will learn a revolutionary process to track, monitor, document, and improve your subordinates' performance.

Who Should Read This Book

Managers/Supervisors. The Performance Conversations® model will give you tools to coach your employees to peak performance while still meeting the administrative requirement of many organizations to produce annual performance appraisal documents.

Human Resources Professionals. Those who are responsible for performance management systems can use this book to audit and improve their current performance systems. Most importantly, after learning the benefits of the Performance Conversations® model, you will decide to replace your current system. Tools and techniques to better train supervisors to manage and document individual performance will also be provided.

Senior Leaders. Chief executives, vice presidents, general managers, and those responsible for large enterprises will benefit from advice on developing an organizational culture that drives individual performance.

What Is in This Book

This book contains three major components:

1. An introduction to the Performance Conversations® model of performance management.
2. A critique of traditional appraisals.
3. A guide to twenty-first-century supervision and management techniques.

The topic areas included are as follows:

- how to avoid the fifteen fallacies of performance appraisals.
- why feedback is superior to appraisals.
- why *conversations*, not *evaluations*, are the key to successfully coaching performance.
- how to integrate supervision and performance management tasks.
- managing behavior, conformance, and performance.
- why and how organizational culture drives individual performance.
- introduction of the angle theory of feedback.
- how to use the Performance Conversations* model.
- pay alternatives that support twenty-first-century approaches to management.

How to Read This Book

The best way to read this book is in the order that it was written! © However, busy managers who are eager for the solution should read chapters 1–3, the quick reference points at the end of each chapter, and then skip to part III. Part III (chapters 8, 9, and 10) comprises the how-to portion of the book. Part II presents the full argument as to why you should *never, ever* use traditional appraisals to manage performance.

Website and Other Resources

The website at www.performanceconversations.com is an ever growing resource on the subject of, and solutions to, more effective performance management. It contains tools, sample forms, newsletters, articles, a bibliography, and other resources for managers and supervisors.

I would be very interested in your experience with the Performance Conversations* model. There is a feedback section on the website, so please take an opportunity to share your thoughts and experiences. You can also write to share any horror stories about your past experience with performance appraisals.

I wrote this book because I am passionate about human performance. It is my hope that you are inspired to make performance management changes in your organization.

PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS

In Action

Rethinking performance evaluations

Performance evaluations aren't making the grade

BY PATRICK MIRZA

"How are you going to evaluate me?" asked speaker Christopher Lee, holding up a speaker evaluation form. In Lee's case, the question served more than his own self-interest—it opened the door to a substantive critique of current performance management techniques and suggestions for implementing a newer model.

In his Tuesday morning concurrent session "Powerful Performance Conversations," Lee encouraged HR professionals to do away with old-fashioned performance systems, which create "performance conformations, not performance conversations."

He pointed out some of the notable flaws among traditional performance appraisal systems, which usually:

- **Assume that supervisors are omniscient.** Most performance evaluations use input only from supervisors, not from employees or others. Lee drew home the weakness in such an approach when he asked attendees: "What are your employees doing right now?" Workers could be doing their best or their worst work at that very moment, and attendees would have no way of knowing.
- **Are based on negative reinforcement.** Such reinforcement does not work, especially in today's work environment that demands employee engagement and commitment. "People sell their labor but volunteer their commitment," Lee said.
- **Are not flexible enough.** "We assume that these [performance instruments] designed by HR and consultants in 2007 will apply to every position all the time, three or four years later."

Lee's most convincing evidence may have come from attendees themselves. When he polled the sizable crowd of gathered HR professionals, more than half admitted that the majority of their managers—and even the majority of attendees themselves—don't complete their performance evaluations on time.

Further, large numbers of attendees raised their hands when asked if they had ever seen a performance evaluation lead to a grievance, resignation, harmful response or decreased performance from

a once-high-performing employee.

"Is that a resolution program?" Lee asked rhetorically. "No, it's not the one you want."

Instead, Lee encouraged attendees to treat performance management as a system, one that has four key components.

First, he said, manage the organizational culture, since this sends a powerful message about those work habits that are acceptable and those that are not. Audit your culture, he told attendees, by asking such questions as: Do workers come early and stay late? What is expected of workers?

Second, HR professionals must deal up their managers. Managers must learn to engage in a dialogue with workers about their performance. To that end, managers must be trained and held accountable. "Bad supervision equals bad performance managers," Lee said.

Third, employers must provide employees with meaningful work. This includes involving employees in the process of designing, delivering and assessing their own work so they have ownership in the process. Otherwise, Lee said, "employees are not accountable for the outcomes, they are accountable only for the time they spend on their tasks."

Finally, companies must align their HR systems to reinforce the message about performance. For example, companies that demand top-flight performance but pay substantial wages or provide only mediocre training do not send a consistent message to workers.

Creating an environment where managers and employees can engage in a dialogue about performance is a key element of an effective performance system, Lee stressed. "Before we can have a conversation with an employee, we have to have an environment created that allows us to have a conversation," he said. "And that conversation can't start the day we start evaluating the employee." ■



PHOTOGRAPH BY

Joseph Christopher Lee challenged HR professionals at a Tuesday evening session to break out of old-fashioned performance systems.

Patrick Mirza is editor of HR Magazine.

A clever rhyme keeps employee evaluations on time

BY STEPHEN MILLER

A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down. And a bit of humor can encourage busy managers to submit timely performance evaluations, as was demonstrated by Bob Pruitt, the director of Human Resources at Parkview Noble Hospital in Kentuckyville, Ind., Tuesday morning in an evening "Rise & Shine" session called "The Timely Performance Evaluation: Exceeding It with Humor."

Like other hospitals, Parkview Noble is subject to the standards of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), which requires that 93 percent of all evaluations be submitted within 30 days of employee anniversary dates. Since managers generally regard evaluations as one of their most unpleasant tasks, meeting that standard had proved challenging, Pruitt said he initially had followed the tried-and-true method of sending out threatening "laggard" notices—saying that if managers submitted late evaluations, HR would hold a meeting with them (and their vice president) to discuss the situation. "That got the response rate up, but it wasn't me," Pruitt said. And he noticed that managers would duck when they saw him walking down the hall.

Then Pruitt had an epiphany. He remembered the Burma Shave roadside advertisements of his youth, in which rhyming verses were placed 100 feet apart, building up to the final Burma Shave sign. For example, "Fishermen/For a Lucky Strike/Share the Plea/For a Face/He'll Like/Burma Shave." Or this one: "I proposed/To Ma/She refused/Ma won/Ma/If I'd used/Burma Shave."

In addition to a formal notice that evaluat-

see EVALUATIONS, page 4

Model review system focuses on future performance

MINNEAPOLIS — Performance evaluations should be eliminated, according to **Christopher Lee**.

"Traditional appraisal systems focus almost exclusively on past performance," said Lee, human resources director at **Bates College**.

Such systems arouse anxiety because pay and recognition are tied to these annual "report cards" and review sessions feature one-way communication from managers about how employees met or failed to meet performance standards, Lee said.

Speaking at the **College and University Professional Association for Human Resources** national convention, Lee said HR executives could eradicate employee-manager friction by focusing on future performance.

You could improve performance, employee relations and achievement of institutional goals if you implement a system free from evaluations.

Bates has operated such a system for the last several years, but Lee said he wants to improve on it and create a new universal model for performance management. After reading around two dozen books on the subject, he says

HR expert provides solutions

Performance evaluation is flawed because it is based on past problems, according to **Christopher Lee**, HR director at **Bates College**. Supervisors should provide feedback without appraisal, he said. His other suggestions for solving traditional performance management problems included:

- **Focus on the work, not the individual.** Tailor PE tools to the work being performed. Align job descriptions with organizational mission and goals.
- **Encourage a dialogue between supervisors and employees.** Employ the coaching model and create an environment where feedback is expected.
- **Focus on the future.** Avoid punishing past efforts and concentrate on improving or sustaining good performance.
- **Manage behavior.** Give examples of good/bad behavior.
- **Hold frequent progress reviews.** Require monthly, short meetings.
- **Create a performance log.** Keep a portfolio of performance events that is reviewed by supervisors and employees. Ban new information at end-of-year interviews.
- **Fix managers.** Hold supervisors accountable for the timeliness, accuracy and thoroughness of performance evaluations. Train and support managers.
- **Make employees responsible.** Have employees identify and eliminate performance challenges.
- **Fix the organizational culture.** Adjust/manage the culture, environment, system, policies and procedures that impact employee performance.
- **Do not link pay with performance.** Use money as a reward, not a motivator. Recognize when possible and seek to support intrinsic rewards.
- **Reward results as they occur.** Create a limited and public merit pool and provide different amounts for large and small accomplishments by individuals and departments. ■

Evaluation contains many fallacies

Bates College HR director **Christopher Lee's** research on performance evaluation uncovered the following:

Myth: A well-designed PE system always works well.

Truth: It won't work if PEs are not completed.

Myth: One size fits all.

Truth: Different types of professionals have different needs/requirements.

Myth: Supervisors accurately rate performance.

Truth: Supervisors have various motivations and pressures to give good ratings.

Myth: PEs are a necessary evil.

Truth: Many successful organizations don't have PEs.

Myth: Linking pay to past performance will motivate future performance.

Truth: Research does not support pay as a motivator and merit increases do not work in bad economic times.

Myth: Appraising performance is enough.

Truth: Bad behavior undermines good performance.

Myth: Progressive discipline occurs inside the PE process.

Truth: Progressive discipline occurs separately.

Myth: A well-trained supervisor can overcome rater bias

Truth: Everyone is human.

Myth: Supervisors keep detailed records

Truth: Many supervisors start tracking performance just before PE sessions.

Myth: Managers give subordinates enough feedback.

Truth: Research shows there is never enough communication. ■

experts note common fallacies of current systems and suggest solutions to problems.

Lee's model includes a daily performance log kept by supervisors and employees and a portfolio of performance indicators and events. It has frequent progress reviews.

The ideal performance management system does not tie pay to performance, Lee said. "You should be honest and tell people that you don't pay what they are worth, but what their job is worth."

Money should be used as a reward, not a motivator, Lee continued. Rewards should be given "on-the-spot" for exemplary behavior and results, he said. HR executives should also create a limited and public merit pay pool to provide rewards to a small percentage of nominated employees. A committee of senior leaders from the institution should select and announce award recipients and amounts. ■

Christopher D. Lee, Ph.D., SPHR

Biography

Chris Lee is a human resources practitioner, lecturer, researcher, and author. He is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resource Services with the Virginia Community College System, a system of 23 colleges that serves nearly 400,000 credit and non-credit students. His background includes having served as the chief human resources officer for three different colleges or universities.

Formerly a question writer for the *PHR* and *SPHR* examinations administered by the Human Resources Certification Institute (HRCI), he is currently a member of its Exam Review Panel. His areas of expertise are employment, training, and performance management—or, in his words, "finding, developing, and managing talent in organizations." He is the author a recently released book entitled *Performance Conversations: An alternative to appraisals*. He is also the author of a book called *Search Committees*, which is a guide to the hiring process for colleges and universities and other HR related articles.

He is a frequent presenter at national, regional, and local conferences for the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Christopher holds a master's degree in human resource management, a doctor of philosophy degree in human resource development, and he is also certified as a Senior Professional in Human Resources. He can be reached at chris@performanceconversations.com.

PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS

Fact Sheet

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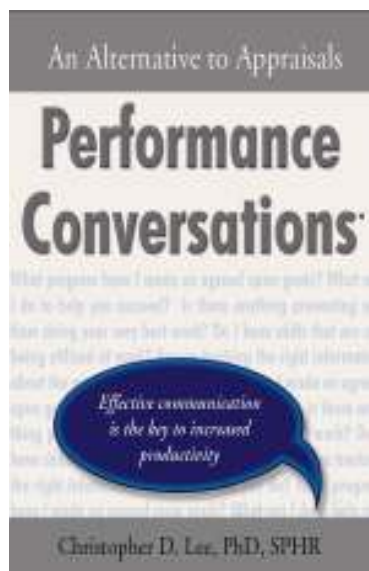
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“Performance Conversations is a breath of fresh air for leaders in all walks of life. Dr. Lee’s methods have an impact that goes far beyond performance appraisals – they will change the core of your workplace culture, and drive changes in morale, turnover and performance.”

*-Richard S. Gallagher, author of *The Soul of an Organization* and *Great Customer Connections**

“The book is thought provoking and very readable. It would be difficult for someone to read the book and not go away with some real ideas for improvement. Good "takeaways" especially in the area of how to manage people.

-Scott Keenan, Global Director of HR, inCode Wireless.



SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

Powerful Performance Conversations

Australia Higher Education Conference
Melbourne, Australia, November 27-29, 2006

Performance Conversations Instead of Performance Confrontations"

College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR)
National Conference; San Diego, CA September 2006

Performance Conversations Instead of Performance Confrontations"

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) National Conference
Washington, D.C. June 2006

Finding, Developing, and Managing Talent in Organizations [Opening Keynote]

Maine Human Resources Convention – Rockland Maine, May 9, 2006

"Accountability and Responsibility: Performance Management for Volunteer Leaders"

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) National Leadership Conference
Alexandria, VA, November 2005

*Invited speaker

Powerful Performance Conversations [Pre-Conference Workshop]

College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR)
National Conference; Orlando, FL, September 2005

Powerful Performance Conversations

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) National Conference
San Diego, CA, June 2005

"The Fallacies of Performance Appraisals and How To Overcome Them"

Employment Management Association National Conference
Dallas, TX, April 2005

*Invited speaker

"The Fallacies of Performance Appraisals and How To Overcome Them"

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) National Conference
New Orleans, LA, June 2004

PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS IN ACTION

