

Tips for Writing Comments in Performance Reviews

Adding relevant comments to your Performance Review challenges anyone's memory and writing skills. For your own or your Participant's Review, hopefully you've kept performance notes throughout the review period so that you don't have to rely on memory and can cite specific examples. Here are a few other tips that can help you provide more relevant, constructive comments on your Performance Reviews.

Tip	Poor Examples	Better Alternatives
1 Comment on specific, observable behaviors.	Ed is getting better about not flying off the handle during production meetings.	Ed has provided constructive feedback numerous times during production meetings this quarter.
2 Comment on behavior, not personality.	Ann has a very overbearing personality and comes across as loud and obnoxious during team meetings.	Ann needs to do more active listening during team meetings, stick to the agenda items, and stop interrupting others.
3 Comment on behavior, not intent.	Margaret gives up too easily on getting her point across and doesn't even try to get along with the other scientists.	Margaret is very quiet during R&D strategy meetings and doesn't contribute even when asked for her opinion.
4 Avoid making excuses for an employee's performance.	Stuart hasn't met his performance objectives this quarter but it's probably because his budget was cut in half.	Stuart did not meet his performance objectives and did not participate in the team meeting that brainstormed ways to be resourceful with a reduced budget.
5 Avoid inserting assumptions about causes.	Ingrid is getting behind in her work because she recently went through a divorce and is emotionally devastated. This affects her ability to think straight.	Ingrid has missed three proposal deadlines this quarter and has become angry when held accountable for the missed deadlines.
6 Avoid direct comparisons to other employees.	John is more experienced than Mark so I always go to John whenever I need to discuss problems.	John is very open to suggestions from other departments and responds quickly to solving problems in his area.
7 Avoid "hearsay" in Comments.	People have said that Harry is often abrupt with customers.	Harry and I discussed how he can improve his interaction with customers.
8 Give "stand-alone" comments that make sense when read by themselves.	I gave Mark the same score on this competency as I did on the previous competency.	Mark is good at seeking input from others, doing research on competitor buying practices, and using his industry experience to draw accurate conclusions about our target audience.
9 Ensure written comments are consistent with evaluations.	<i>Goals Evaluation = Does Not Meet Expectations</i> Sally is a productive worker and joy to have in the department.	<i>Goals Evaluation = Does Not Meet Expectations</i> Sally struggled to meet her goals this year and failed to complete three of the five.