

Establishing Meaningful Goals – Frequently Asked Questions

Performance Management-Educational Session Three

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Q&A

- 1. What happens if a goal I discussed with my supervisor was not included in my performance appraisal?**
 - It's important that you ask about the reasons why a goal was not included.
 - Perhaps a priority changed, or the timing wasn't right for a particular goal to be worked on any longer – but you should be told the reasons why. If you aren't, please ask.
 - What were your accomplishments re: the goal? Can they be linked to another goal instead?
 - There is an employee comments section on the Halogen 2.0 appraisal where you might include your accomplishments for this goal, if you have not already included the goal in your SOA.

- 2. What happens if my goals do not align with my supervisor's expectations?**
 - That situation should not happen – you and your supervisor should be discussing goals and setting expectations.
 - You want to establish and work on goals that support the department/unit goals, and not set goals independently.
 - If goals change during the year, your supervisor needs to tell you and if necessary, your goals must be modified.

- 3. At what point in the performance appraisal review should I have a conversation with my supervisor about my goals for the next year? (i.e., before completing or submitting my SOA or after?)**
 - The goal setting discussion occurs after you complete and submit your SOA.
 - Goal setting occurs as part of the performance appraisal discussion as you plan for the coming year.
 - You and your supervisor might talk informally throughout the year about new goals, but you should have a formal meeting with your supervisor to discuss and finalize them.

- 4. How can I suggest additional goals to my supervisor?**
 - Consider the timing of the goal you're proposing, and what else is going on, other priorities
 - Put together a short business plan (verbal or written) for the goal you want to suggest, including:
 - The goal you're proposing
 - The expected outcome(s) of achieving the goal
 - Why now?
 - How the goal supports your function and/or development, and unit/department goals
 - Generally, what resources (time, \$, equipment/materials) might be needed in order to achieve the goal?
 - Potential effect on co-workers, customers, your supervisor, other staff
 - What competencies you will use and perhaps enhance

5. How do I write a goal when I don't have numerical metrics to work with?

- Consider how and where you can add metrics to your goals. For example:
 - How will you know if you are successful? (quantity, quality, timeliness, effective use of resources, effects of effort, manner of performance, method of performing assignments)
 - Does someone in your area have a similar goal? How do they measure success?
 - Perhaps developing metrics can be included in the goal.

6. Is it realistic to set longer-term goals during a very fast-moving environment where things are constantly changing?

- Yes, you will want to set both short-term and longer-term goals (e.g., 2-3 years out)
- Even in a fast-moving environment, there are indicators of a longer-term vision, mission. For example, take the 2020 Project. It's a long term strategic initiative and many goals that departments (and individuals) are working now, lead up to the 2020 Project.
- Ask yourself - What are your objectives for the short-term goals and how will they move the unit/department forward? What are your short-term goals leading you toward?

7. What if goals need to change partway through the year?

- If goals need to be changed, ensure that you and your supervisor have a discussion about what is changing – how and why.
- Then you'll want to make the change(s) in your goals/expectations for the year to ensure that your performance is evaluated on the most current expectations.

8. How many goals should an employee have? How many goals are too many?

1. There is no set number of goals that you should have.
2. What might help you determine how many goals you'll be working on is by discussing questions, such as:
 - Priority and complexity of goals – Are there priority goals that will affect your ability to work on other goals?
 - Timing – Are some goals worked on during specific times of the year, allowing you to build in other goals at other times?
 - Capacity/learning curve – Are you working on several new goals that will require gaining skills and knowledge? Do you need the time to do this sufficiently?
 - Staffing and resources – What do these levels look like in your unit/department? If your unit is currently understaffed, that might affect your ability to take on new goals until that situation is resolved. At that point, you can have a conversation with your supervisor about adding to your goals.

9. Will it "hurt" our evaluation, if we include a goal that would benefit our customers; but, the campus/technology/funds restricts us from accomplishing a goal? IE: customer availability in regards to space, new software, etc.

- It is important that you have a conversation with your supervisor as soon as practicable if you feel there are challenges that would prevent you from accomplishing a goal. Your supervisor often has a broader view of available resources for your unit and may be able to assist you. Communicating

challenges early on may help demonstrate your proficiency in one or more competencies (e.g. Results Orientation & Execution, Solving Problems, Employee Engagement).

10. Are you able to do this presentation to my department if requested?

- Anyone at UC Merced is able to view this presentation online by clicking [here](#). Please contact your designated HR Business Partner or HR Consultant if you need additional guidance.

11. What do you recommend when my supervisor hasn't taken the time to check in with me, and now I don't know if she is even aware of the obstacles I've faced this year in completing the goals we set last summer?

- Both the employee and supervisor play an active role in the performance management process. If you are not receiving feedback throughout the appraisal year, take the initiative to schedule a meeting with your supervisor. Take that opportunity to discuss your performance including any obstacles impeding progress towards your goals. Be proactive, effective communication is key, have these discussions early on, don't wait to raise your concerns at the conclusion of the appraisal period. If you have attempted this and have not been successful in communicating with your supervisor, please contact your designated HR Business Partner or HR Consultant for guidance.

12. What can an employee do if a supervisor doesn't have time to discuss goals or standards over the year?

- Please refer to the response to question #11.

13. How will HR ensure that goals are challenging enough and not just easily attainable so that all employees can receive a fair merit increase?

- It is a supervisor's responsibility to establish meaningful goals. HR provides managers with the tools necessary to conduct fair and equitable appraisal, including tools to help establish meaningful and challenging goals. If you don't believe the goals are challenging enough, please discuss with your supervisor and provide recommendations for alternative goals. Again, play an active role in the performance management process.

During the HR review step, we may provide feedback regarding the goals listed, but our recommendations may or may not be incorporated. HR strongly encourages supervisors to incorporate our feedback however; if they choose not to do so, the appraisal is administered as-is.

14. Can professional development such as supervisor certification or customer service academies be listed as a goal for employees who hold routine, service based jobs (e.g. Lantern Café, and Dining Commons workers)? It is sometimes challenging to set goals for these individuals as their job duties are static.

- All professional development opportunities need to be listed under the "Professional Development/Skills Building" section of the appraisal form. You should consider setting goals that would allow an employee to demonstrate the knowledge or skills gained from participating in a development program. Example: If a small group of employees are assigned to attend a customer service academy, you could task that group with meeting with other managers or leads within your functional area to establish best practices to improve customer service.