

**topic:**

**HUMAN RESOURCES: Should we do away with performance appraisals? My supervisors hate it, and the employees do too!**

**advice:**

Chances are you just wrapped up performance appraisals. They were completed last month and you're tempted to do away these medieval torture devices. Believe it or not, I suggest you keep them in place and change the process. "Surely you must be joking?" I am not, and don't call me Shirley.

I suggest making ongoing feedback and documentation a goal for 2017. When I practiced employment law defense, I often received calls from clients who were ready to terminate an employee for performance issues. When I asked to see the documentation, I often found that it was nonexistent or full of conclusory statements and opinions. Failing to provide and document meaningful performance feedback not only increases risk, but forces an employer to forgo all the benefits of providing feedback and delivering honest performance appraisals. From increased motivation to improved performance — there is no question that an effective feedback and performance appraisal process benefits employees and the organization alike.

So to make the performance appraisal process meaningful, employers should:

1. Mandate that leadership provide feedback (and document it) throughout the year;
2. Train supervisors on how to effectively document and provide feedback;
3. Ensure leaders are rewarded for doing it and penalized for not doing it; and
4. Enlist the help of the C-Suite to ensure documented feedback is a part of every employee's file.

Taking a few of these steps today not only keeps your employees engaged, but it can keep your organization out of the courtroom.



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