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Q: Why do many employees react negatively to being evaluated and how can a healthy evaluation attitude be developed?

Note: Following are excerpts from the prepublication manuscript. Do not distribute without citation. Lopiano, D.A. and Zotos, C. (Publication 2013) The Athletics Director's Handbook: A Comprehensive Practical Guide to the Management of Scholastic and Intercollegiate Athletics Programs. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

A. There is little doubt that if a room full of people are asked what they think about performance evaluation, the vast majority would say something negative. Following are several reasons why people react negatively to being evaluated and suggested solutions to addressing these concerns:

- Managers are basically uncomfortable in the evaluator's role, have a tendency to rush through the process, and do not accomplish specific objectives.
- Managers use evaluation in a punitive way to highlight weaknesses and demonstrate their own power.
- Employees are kept in the dark on what evaluation tools will be used, if any, and what will be measured until they walk into the evaluation meeting.
- Evaluation is purely subjective according to the ideas and inclinations of the manager.

Solutions:

- The athletics director should meet with all supervisors each year to emphasize the importance of annual evaluations.
- Ask the supervisor to send the employee a copy of the evaluation instrument and the employee's official position description, explaining that the supervisor will be completing the evaluation instrument in consultation with the employee at the evaluation meeting. Ask the employee to come to the meeting with any suggested changes that need to be made in the official position description.
- Ask supervisors to begin each evaluation meeting with a review of the employee's accomplishments and positive comments.
- In every area in which the employee receives a negative evaluation, insist that the supervisor

record one or two specific examples of inadequate performance.

- Emphasize that the evaluation meeting should not be a corrective action meeting. If an employee demonstrates a major work deficiency, a corrective action meeting should occur at the time such deficiency occurs – not at the end of the evaluation period.
- Ask the supervisor to go into the evaluation meeting with a draft evaluation completed. The meeting should start by emphasizing that the evaluation being shared is a draft to be discussed. Encourage the employee to disagree if he or she believes the assessment is incorrect. Be open to discussing those items on which there is disagreement and reviewing your assessment.
- Close each evaluation meeting with the supervisor asking the employee about their professional aspirations and how the supervisor might help in the achievement of the employee's career goals.
- Use the ending comment portion of the evaluation to specify areas which need improvement in the coming academic year, reiterate the positive contributions of the employee and detail how the supervisor will help advance the employee's professional development plan.

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