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JEWISH TRIBUNE
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I have been working so hard lately in my role as a receptionist in a small company. I believe that I am doing an amazing job as I am getting great feedback from the customers and co-workers. However, I recently had my biannual performance review with my supervisor and was shocked to learn that I was below many of the standards required for some of the duties and responsibilities. This was news to me. This document influences my salary, my position, my career path and

standing with the company. I do not understand this review. Please could you shed some light on this worrisome situation.

Bad Reviews

Dear Bad Reviews

Unfortunately, many of us rely on these annual or biannual performance reviews to reflect our performance and a year's worth of hard work. It is often inaccurate and is subjective as the information on the form is merely the personal reflections of the supervisor.

Although many human resources department rely heavily on this document as a tool to manage the work and behaviour of an employee (and even the manager sometimes), Lisa Quast from www.forbes.com posits that many managers see performance appraisals as nothing more than an empty, bureaucratic exercise forced on them by HR. She points to many sites on the internet (type in performance appraisal), and you'll find various polls revealing the high percentage of employees who feel appraisals are pointless.

The employment counselors at JVS recommend that it is important for employees to understand that in performance reviews, it doesn't matter what you think you are doing at work. What matters is how your boss thinks you are doing. They recommend the following tips to help you avoid getting a shocking, negative review by making sure your manager's perceptions are the same as yours.

- 1.** Have regular meetings to make sure that you and the manager are on the same page with the same expectations. It's about doing your work that meets the manager's standards and preferences.
- 2.** Don't talk about your review. Focus on your manager's expectations, priorities and preferences. Ask the manager to identify areas he or she wants you to do differently and what you can improve on.
- 3.** Don't point fingers, blame others, blame the manager or tell him or her that you are doing it already. You need to show your manager that you are actually doing it rather than just talking about it. Actions always speaks louder than words. Remember, the manager doesn't have to adapt to you; it's your responsibility to adapt to the manager's preferences and work around them.
- 4.** Complaining to the Human Resources department is a waste of time, and usually too late. Once the review is complete, your manager's opinion is how you have been performing. You will have to start again and build towards your next review. Even if your manager avoids conflicts and problems and has trouble giving you constructive feedback, it's still important that you find out what you need to do along the way till your next review to improve.
- 5.** Prepare for the review. You will probably be told in advance that you will have a meeting to discuss your performance review. In some organizations, the employee is given the document before the meeting to reflect and review. List all of your accomplishments over the time building up the review. Make sure you have facts and figures as much as possible to demonstrate your work and your successes. List your areas of improvement as well. Be ready to discuss this information in a clear, professional and articulate manner just in case you need to present your work.



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As JVS job developers warn, getting a good performance review has little to do with your actual work and everything to do with the manager's expectations and perceptions. Don't work harder hoping to get a good review. Work smarter by clarifying as much as you can with your boss. Also, a poor performance review is a red flag that you might be in the wrong job in the wrong place at the wrong time. It's a chance to self-reflect on your workplace and whether you want to stay there or whether they want you there, especially if you are doing a good job.

Joanna

To submit your questions for this column in confidence, email dearjoanna@jvstoronto.org.

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