

Leader's Guide

Jack – Employee Performance Evaluation Exercise for Supervisors

Introduction:

Determining how to address a specific performance failure of an otherwise *high performing* employee can prove to be a difficult situation to navigate. Supervisors responsible for completing employee performance evaluations are faced with a variety of challenges. This training exercise sets the stage for supervisor reflection and group discussion on how to handle common scenarios such as an employee who is thought of as a top performer in many aspects, but who fails to exhibit certain relationship building and people skills that help support a strong team environment and positive interaction with others. Use this employee performance scenario to prompt discussion on how to navigate common challenges in the performance evaluation process.

Process:

1. Provide supervisors time to read through the description of Jack's performance, and have them complete an evaluation of his performance.
 - o Ideally, incorporate your County's performance evaluation format and rating scale options for this exercise.
 - o Alternatively, you can have participants rate Jack based on the competencies described on the last page of the employee scenario document.
2. When the evaluations are completed, have supervisors share their rating selections for Jack. This exercise can help build consensus across departments or within County work groups regarding how your rating scales should be applied.
3. Discuss how supervisors would opt to address the areas of concern with Jack. What is their approach to dealing with one significant area of concern when the employee is otherwise a high performer?
4. You may wish to encourage small group discussion for this exercise, followed by an exchange of ideas with the larger group, along with sharing HR insight on the topics addressed.
5. Hearing how other supervisors would address the challenges presented in this scenario will increase performance management knowledge among your leadership group, and can help build greater organizational consistency.

Sample Questions to Prompt Group Discussion:

- How do you address (or not address) a specific area of concern related to the performance of an employee who is otherwise an extremely high performer and valued asset to your team?
- If you choose to address Jack's performance concerns in the written performance evaluation comments and/or ratings, in what section(s) or category(ies) of the evaluation would you include this issue of concern?
- Would you modify the rating for one or more categories in the performance evaluation?
- Would you modify the overall rating based on the issues that occurred?

- Jack excels in many areas, making him a valued asset to the department. Concern regarding his performance is limited to certain interactions – in this case, his approach to working with others who are not demonstrating the same high level of performance as him, or who bring different strengths to the team. What do you think is the best way to approach this scenario?
- Do you adjust your approach because you're concerned about upsetting such a high performer who brings so much value to your team? Consider how you're likely to address this performance concern with Jack, compared to how you might be inclined to address the same performance issue with a lower performing employee. If there is a difference, is it justified and appropriate? Discuss thoughts and reactions.
- How might you approach this situation in a way that will help Jack to improve this aspect of his performance? Are there ways of addressing this issue that are more likely to result in Jack being willing to work on this issue, rather than reject the performance feedback and react in a way that is not beneficial to the organization?
- Does Jack's value to the organization outweigh the need to approach him on this concern?
- Would it do Jack a disservice if his supervisor fails to adequately communicate the concerns surrounding his behavior and interactions with others in the workplace?
- What if the single performance issue with this top performer was something different? What if there was an incident (or a pattern) of sexual harassment?
- Is there a performance goal that could be discussed with Jack, that would help him see the opportunity to consider feedback and respond constructively, in a way that builds his overall skill and future success?