

The Importance of Planning in Performance Management



The Planning Phase is the WHAT, WHY, and HOW of the Performance Management Process.



The summer months mark the Planning portion of the Performance Management Process at Auburn University. This is a time for supervisors and employees to begin preparing for the new performance year.

Planning is one of the most important phases of any Performance Management Process. The desired outcomes of the Planning phase set the tone and expectations for an employee’s performance for the entire year. Employees need to know, with clarity, what is expected of them, and it is the supervisor’s job to clearly communicate those expectations.

Put simply, the Planning phase of performance management is the what, why, and how of the process. WHAT needs to be done. WHY it needs to be done. HOW it gets done- including behaviors.

The Planning phase includes supervisors and employees meeting one-on-one to discuss expectations for job duties and responsibilities that are a priority, set goals, and identify development needs from the previous year. Each goal, duty, responsibility, or development need must be measurable so a supervisor can determine if they are being met throughout the year.

Best Practices:

BEFORE THE MEETING:	
Spend time planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning sessions should occur during between July 1 and September 1. • Spend ample time to plan before the Planning meeting occurs. • Consider your employees and their role within the department. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review job descriptions • Write a list of current projects • Send employees the Employee Performance Management Planning Form which includes questions designed to assist employees as they prepare for the Planning meeting. • Send an Outlook calendar request to each direct report for separate one-on-one meetings and allow for uninterrupted time.
DURING THE MEETING:	
Set the tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a comfortable and friendly tone. • Discuss the purpose of the meeting and what happens during the Planning phase • Employees and Supervisors should listen to each other and discuss the upcoming year.

<p>Review Expectations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review job duties, position goals, and development needs. • Identify and agree on as few as five and up to ten that are priority. • Open the Performance Review Form. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the same form you'll use the entire year for Planning, Planned Check-Ins, and for the Year-End Review in June. It simply builds throughout the year. • Once the form is open, date and list the job duties, position goals, and development needs identified on the Performance Review Form. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We discuss developing S.M.A.R.T. goals with employees in one of our QuickDive videos. Check it out to learn more.
<p>Consider Development:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider development and career potential. • Look at AU Human Resource Development classes, professional guilds and conferences, or publications. • Date and add recommendations to the Performance Review Form.
<p>Discuss Observed Behaviors:</p>	<p>Job duties and responsibilities are important in establishing performance expectations and reviews. But it's not just about meeting the expectations of a job. It's about how the job is performed. Behaviors matter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a focused conversation about the specific behaviors that will assist the employee to achieve the desired outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the Observed Behaviors website to aid in the conversation. The website can be found by going to aub.ie/observedbehaviors. Here you will find 31 behaviors listed with definitions and varying performance level examples.
<p>AFTER THE MEETING AND THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:</p>	
<p>Coaching & Feedback:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save the Performance Review Form with the updated planning information and send a copy to the employee. • Proceed to the second phase of the Performance Management Process which is Coaching and Feedback. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is really not a phase, but an action that takes place throughout the year. Effective and timely feedback is a critical component of a successful performance management process. • Frequent feedback provides clarity and eliminates surprises. Employees should not be caught unaware when they sit down for their Planned Check-in in a few months time. Employees need to know where they stand. • Offer clear feedback in a timely manner on how they're doing, what's working, and what's not.

The Planning Phase along with the rest of the Performance Management process is discussed in our online courses, MG500e: Introduction to Performance Management and MG510e: Performance Management Fundamentals for Supervisors.

For more information, contact us at autrain@auburn.edu or at aub.ie/performance.



AUBURN UNIVERSITY
HUMAN RESOURCES

Auburn University Human Resources | 1550 E. Glenn Ave | Auburn University, AL 36849 | (334) 844-4145