

This tool provides ratings definitions, tips for writing comments and for conducting a successful review.

MassPerform Ratings Definitions

Exceptional	Performance in this category consistently far exceeds requirements, reaching a level found only in a small percentage of managers. Exceptional performance is associated with work on a project or objective outside the ongoing area of responsibility and which resulted in measurable impact. This rating is not attainable by someone exclusively performing their regular duties flawlessly. Achievements, effort, and results are well beyond those expected at this management level and contributed to a significant organizational accomplishment in terms of increased efficiency, innovative approaches, or significant cost savings. This exceptional manager sustains exemplary accomplishments at the highest level throughout the evaluation period; providing exemplary support to the contributions of the organization; and demonstrates “whatever it takes” and “above and beyond” philosophy.
Highly Effective	Performance in this category consistently exceeds performance standards for assigned responsibilities. The manager who exceeds expectations requires little supervision, regularly brings forward and champions strategies for improving services and/or reducing costs and surpasses required standards and performance expectations. He or she is committed to continuous improvement and enhanced services and displays deep dedication to the agency’s mission and goals. There is little if any room for improvement in fulfilling their regular job functions and agency strategic objectives.
Successful Performer	Performance in this category meets performance standards. Managers who meet expectations consistently deliver expected results, fulfill job requirements and goals, and are valued members of the management team. These are solid accomplished managers who significantly contribute to the success of the agency and have a positive impact on the organization. Performance is on par with other managers and is what is expected for their level of responsibility.
Below	Performance in this category is consistently unacceptable. Managers who do not meet expectations need significant measurable improvement in the near future or face disciplinary action up to and including termination in the next six months.

Tips for Writing Comments

- Identify **specific actions** the manager took to achieve expectations and other accomplishments.
 - Avoid generalities, such as “good job.” Instead, be specific.
 - Break expectations/job responsibilities down to describe *multiple aspects* of how the work was accomplished. Identify and describe the most important contributions to success.
 - Celebrate** the manager’s success with your words.
 - Use **metrics** to illustrate results (40% of the time, 15% improvement, 87% less calls)
- Describe the **impact** the action(s) had on results including unit/agency’s goals and objectives.
- Use **examples** to illustrate and reinforce effective behaviors/decision-making.
- Identify 1-2 areas in which the employee could improve or **develop** additional skill.

Phrases that introduce constructive feedback:

- “*Oliver could improve his performance by ...*”
- “*Jackson can take his performance to the next level by ...*”
- “*Moving forward, Eva could be more attentive to ...*”

Tips for Conducting the Performance Review Conversation

DO This	DON'T Do This	INSTEAD, Try This
Prepare! Review the expectation, all system entries, Check-in notes, customer letters. Then use a Planning Tool to structure your discussion.	Get defensive!	Track with your emotional response; then summarize to show you are listening, ask questions to clarify the employee's perspective.
Explain the reason for the meeting in the invitation and when opening the meeting.	Do reviews on a Friday if it will be a hard or disappointing conversation.	Schedule difficult reviews Monday – Thursday.
PRINT/OPEN the job aids for the SARAH Cycle and 3 Triggers to have at hand.	Re-schedule more than once – or be late.	Honor the employee and their contribution by making it a priority and being on time.
Have a box of Kleenex on your desk.	Allow a knock at the door, text , look at your email, or take a call.	Turn your phone off and plan to meet in a conference room.
Focus on behaviors not personality.	Avoid talking about challenges, circumstances that impacted results, or skills to be developed.	If the year has been tough, say so! If a manager needs skill development, talk about it!
Give specific feedback on what is expected of them – go beyond the stated expectation.	Interrupt the employee or shut down the conversation when responding.	Let the employee finish their thought.
Give balanced feedback on how a manager supervises their staff.	Don't have one-way conversation or tell the employee what to do.	Ask, don't tell. Ask questions to explore issues and options.
LISTEN carefully. Summarize OR empathize to show you heard and understood what is said.	Use 'always' or 'never' to emphasize your point.	Be specific about a circumstance and describe the impact of the action/behavior.
Observe body language and respond to cues. Did an eyebrow just raise? Are their arms crossed?	Use analogies that compare employees to children.	Describe the specific actions taken and their outcomes, facts, examples.
ASK questions to avoid making assumptions or a comment you can't take back.	Fidget! Restlessness makes you look distracted and unsure of your delivery or point of view.	Express confidence by sitting still. Use your hands to gesture when purposeful.
Acknowledge any mannerism that could be misconstrued, i.e., nodding that means you're listening. Or you laugh when you're nervous.	Use "but," e.g., " <i>You do X wonderfully, but I'd like to see you do more of Y.</i> " In this case, "but" negates all that the employee did well.	Use "and" to bridge or simply make two separate statements.
Ask for feedback about your supervision. Ask several questions to get beneath the surface response (see <i>7 Essential Questions</i> resource).		
Own your own mistakes. Pushing blame out on others undermines your credibility.		