

Performance reviews and performance management

Since my last blog post on performance reviews, I have been thinking about your comments and how best to respond and move this conversation forward. I appreciate your candor and your willingness to share thoughtfully your experiences, opinions, and suggestions in an open forum. You gave me plenty to think about—that's one reason it has taken me so long to respond.

I was struck particularly by some of your personal experiences with performance reviews. These examples, along with a recent assessment by HR of last year's performance and compensation review cycle, give me a better understanding of what performance reviews look like through your eyes, and where improvements are needed.

Performance reviews are an important and essential element of performance management. The goals of performance management are to facilitate your development as a professional, help you achieve your career goals, and ensure we successfully execute our mission. Our focus on achieving these goals should be readily apparent to you even when the feedback we are providing is difficult for you to hear. Further, we should be talking with you about these topics continuously throughout the year, not episodically to meet a process requirement. It seems that what some of you are experiencing is inconsistent with these goals.

I believe management—starting with me—must focus more of our time on coaching and contributing to the development of those whom we supervise. I will be challenging myself and the rest of the management team to increase the time we spend with you throughout the year discussing our priorities and expectations, your work and how it relates to our mission, your career ambitions, and the value of your contributions and any areas for increased attention.

I have already begun addressing these issues with our management team. I have also begun working on improving the frequency and the quality of my discussions with those whom I supervise. We, that is management, have some work to do to improve our effectiveness in performance management, in evaluating employee performance, and in providing more frequent and effective feedback and coaching. I am making this one of my priorities for the division. The goal of bringing into alignment our intent and your experience is as important to me as achieving maturity in the implementation of engineered safety.

This is a complex, thought-provoking topic, and I feel the blog is not the best place to continue this conversation. So, by late summer, I will hold a Town Hall meeting to discuss performance management and performance reviews, and how we will be seeking to improve our effectiveness and your experience. In the meantime, please keep your comments and suggestions coming. I assure you that I will read and consider your input carefully and thoughtfully.