Title

A Novel Approach to Conducting Performance Appraisals for Staff Employees in Higher Education Settings: Developing and Implementing More Meaningful Performance Assessment Using Supportive Mobile Technology

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A Novel Approach to Conducting Performance Appraisals for Staff Employees in Higher Education Settings: Developing and Implementing More Meaningful Performance Assessment Using Supportive Mobile Technology

By

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DISSERTATION

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DAVIS

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i

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The annual performance review is a widely used performance management tool required by universities for administrative staff. Many supervisors and employees across all industries are dissatisfied with the conventional annual performance review, and it has been criticized for being resource-consuming and wasteful, potentially damaging to professional relationships, and even counter-productive to improving performance. This qualitative study examines the use of a novel, text-messaging-based technology to initiate light touch check-ins about performance among 28 employees and supervisors volunteers from three higher education institutions. This study assesses the impact of a new performance appraisal system and how to apply this new knowledge towards designing a more effective performance appraisal system. The results of this study indicate overall positive impressions using this alternative system, called TEAMMATES. However, study participants also make several important recommendations for enhancements to enable more flexibility and customization to produce a viable alternative or complement to the conventional annual performance review commonly in practice today.

DEDICATION

       I dedicate this project to employees and supervisors at the university who have completed annual performance reviews, and questioned or dreaded it, or just "played along". You can help shape how to make them **better**, **more effective**, and **more meaningful**. I hope this study moves us a little closer towards these goals.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A heartfelt thank you to Dr. Paul Porter, Dr. Paula Lane, and Dr. Gloria Rodriguez for serving on my dissertation committee. I am especially grateful to Dr. Porter for supporting me—with humor or tough-love as the situation demanded—as I struggled to balance the demands of my career with finishing this dissertation. Without Dr. Lane, I would still be writing my Results chapter; her kindness, straight-talk, and empathy enabled me to cross the finish line. Dr. Rodriguez is among the most talented and inspiring CANDEL faculty; she quite literally changed me as a leader and manager to someone who could, eventually, recognize my own unconscious biases, sexism, and privilege; she also provided the space and guidance for me (and no doubt countless others) to shift and correct—all without making me feel judged or humiliated. The professors of the CANDEL program have given me a priceless gift of knowledge and awareness, and I have committed to applying this gift towards advocating for others with less power and privilege.

I also wish to recognize and thank Dr. Paul Heckman (1943-2019) who encouraged me to apply to the CANDEL program despite my deep knowledge gaps in the field of education. He was the consummate teacher and student-advocate who never let me feel like I didn't belong, even if I was a bit of an anomaly for the program as a then-IRB Director. His impact, spirit, and legacy live in each of his students. I hope any reader of this Acknowledgment would consider donating to the Dr. Paul Heckman Memorial Fund at UC Davis:

https://give.ucdavis.edu/DEDU/324389

Finally, thank you to my friends, family, and husband Woody, who always supported me even when I doubted myself.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal, also known as performance review, is an evaluation or assessment of job-related performance typically conducted by an individual's direct supervisor on an annual basis (Cappelli & Conyon, 2017). The performance appraisal method most commonly recognized in the United States today was born in the mid-20th century during wartime, when it was important to measure individual productivity and identify potential future leaders in the military (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). Soon after performance appraisals took shape, critics emerged citing issues of fairness, bias, and potential negative impact on workplace morale and relationships (Kelly, 1958; Likert, 1959; McGregor, 1957). Nearly 60 years later, performance appraisals remain controversial, and calls for their elimination have grown louder, particularly in the last decade (Baker, 2013; Chandler, 2016; Coens & Jenkins, 2002; Culbert, 2008). Colorado State employee-performance scholar Kevin Murphy described the conventional performance review an "expensive and complex way of making people unhappy" ("Measure of a Man," 2016). And UCLA professor emeritus of management Samuel Culbert called the performance review a corporate sham that "is one of the most insidious, most damaging, and yet most ubiquitous of corporate activities" (2008, p. 1). Despite decades-old criticisms that persist today, over 90% of companies engage in some kind of performance appraisal process (Longenecker, Fink, & Caldwell, 2014a; Saba & Bourke, 2010). Yet eliminating performance reviews altogether has backfired for some organizations (CEB, 2018).

The conventional performance review process typically administered among staff in higher education settings presents an important opportunity to improve an institutional practice that impacts many employees. Furthermore, universities are by their nature and existence places for creativity and innovation. Yet as an institution, the university struggles to innovate or think creatively within its own rigid structures and processes (Bess & Dee, 2008; Christensen &

Eyring, 2011). This project challenges the conventional thinking that universities cannot innovate their own bureaucratic practices with regard to ubiquitous performance reviews.

In this dissertation, I shall study a different approach to conducting performance reviews that addresses some of the major criticisms of the conventional performance appraisal used in a public Tier I research university.[1] In this study, I have devised a new performance appraisal methodology that I have termed **TEAMMATES** (**TE**chnology **A**ssisting **M**ultilevel **MA**nagers **T**o **E**ngage **S**taff). Modeled, in part, after Adobe Inc.'s "Check-Ins," TEAMMATES includes increased frequency of conversations and what this study terms *personalized goal setting* (Adobe, 2017). TEAMMATES also adds a familiar technology (i.e., text messaging) in a novel approach to prompt more conversations, including electronic exchanges such as email or text messages or in-person discussions between supervisor and employee. (TEAMMATES will be described in detail under Chapter 3: Methodology.) In addition, TEAMMATES supports active and continuous engagement and the implied social contract and expectation that the employee's success is a shared responsibility between the employee and supervisor. Specifically, this dissertation will study how TEAMMATES was perceived by participants in terms of usefulness and effectiveness, compared with the conventional performance review, and explore areas for improvement for additional study or wider dissemination of the tool.

Research Questions

There are two questions I seek to address in this study:

1. What can be learned about the impact of a new performance appraisal system that uses supportive technology in a novel approach for staff at three selected higher education institutions?

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[1] Notably, the performance appraisal at the University of California San Diego is virtually the same as at all other University of California campuses since it models an appraisal form promulgated by the university's headquarters, the University of California Office of the President in Oakland. Furthermore, the performance appraisal used at the University of California has many shared characteristics with those used at other universities, both public and private.

2. How can this learning be applied to designing a more effective performance appraisal system?

The importance of the research questions and TEAMMATES' overall approach are rooted in two beliefs: (1) that more frequent conversations are better, and (2) that personalizing the process and applying a familiar technology in a novel manner (i.e., texting through mobile phones) will improve the performance evaluation experience for both supervisor and employee (Cappelli & Conyon, 2017; CEB, 2017; Morris, 2016; Nelson, 2000). The study will provide an opportunity to reflect on user experiences and make recommendations for improvement on the process if it is repeated, modified, or expanded.

Given the pace at which universities innovate, it seems unlikely that they will completely abandon the annual performance review. Therefore, the next reasonable question is how to improve or supplement it with something that users will believe in and find more effective than the current practice.

Impact and Need to Change

The stakes of today's performance review are high for all employees where performance reviews are conducted. The performance review can impact pay, promotion, job satisfaction, retention, and employee morale. This study will explore a potential enhancement or supplemental tool to today's traditional performance review process. This process typically involves an annual one-time summary review provided by the employee in the form of a self-evaluation narrative and a scoring methodology or classification of performance by the supervisor. Furthermore, supervisor narratives are not always required and evaluations are sometimes skipped due to competing priorities. As an alternative or supplement to this current practice, I studied a new system. TEAMMATES will be assessed qualitatively, with a focus on

- frequency of communication between supervisor and staff member;
- perceived impact on openness and quality of conversations about performance;

- perceived impact on the supervisor–employee relationship;

- usefulness or perceived applicability of the feedback received; and

- addressing shortfalls of this new performance system and needed improvements to the system for additional study or wider implementation.

Notably, I will not investigate the impact of TEAMMATES across all possible workplace performance outcomes, such as whether the intervention resulted in better pay and promotion outcomes for the employee. Rather, the main focus will be on assessing TEAMMATES as a tool to manage performance, including, but not limited to, the frequency and quality of the performance conversations between employee and supervisor. In addition, I will examine what can be learned to improve this new performance management system.

Critics of the conventional performance review argue that performance reviews have the opposite impact of their intended effect, and that both supervisors and employees are discouraged by the performance appraisal exercise. As one writer stated, "One of the goals, if not the most important goal of the performance appraisal and review process, is to motivate employees. At its worst, the exact opposite occurs and employees are made to feel unimportant, abused and unappreciated for the job they have done. Tensions mount, feelings are bruised, goodwill is lost" (Nelson, 2000, p. 39). Other writers have reached similar conclusions and offer similar warnings about the possible damage performance reviews introduce into the workplace environment (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Ilyas & Abdullah, 2016; Kim & Rubianty, 2011; Pincus, 1986). But first, we must understand how performance reviews came to be, their evolution, and their status today.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The controversy surrounding how to make performance appraisals effective—and whether they are helpful or harmful—appears to have existed since appraisals were invented. A review of the scientific literature suggests there has been limited research supporting the annual performance appraisal's use or effectiveness in university settings for staff. Furthermore, there is scant peer-reviewed literature on effective alternative models. Yet ask most people with whom you work at the university whether they honestly find the process of giving or receiving a performance review a valued exercise, such a question is commonly met with laughter or eye-rolling as though *anyone* could enjoy the experience.

This study will examine what can be learned about the impact of a new performance appraisal system that uses supportive technology in a novel approach for staff at three selected higher education institutions. The system is called TEAMMATES and uses text messaging technology to initiate informal conversations between supervisor and staff member. TEAMMATES will be described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Background: Understanding the Current Problem

Universities are intended by their nature and existence to be places for creativity and innovation. Yet as institutions, universities struggle at innovating or thinking creatively within their own rigid structures and processes (Bess & Dee, 2008; Christensen & Eyring, 2011).

In the context of performance reviews, Gallup found these troubling statistics (Wigert & Harter, 2017):

- Just 50% of employees reported that they clearly know what is expected of them at work.

- Only 14% of employees strongly agree that performance reviews inspire them to improve.

- 26% of employees strongly agree that performance reviews are accurate.

- 21% of employees strongly agree that pay and incentive motivate them to achieve their goals.

Others researchers have found that only 4% of human resources (HR) leaders feel performance reviews accurately assess employee performance (CEB, 2017). Yet traditional performance evaluations remain ever present in companies and organizations, including higher education. University faculty and staff are typically evaluated annually but sometimes more frequently (Smith, 1995). (For purposes of this dissertation, I shall use "conventional" and "traditional" interchangeably in the context of the performance review.) Furthermore, there is a pervasive dissatisfaction with the annual performance review described by Lawler (1994) and others, a perception that performance appraisal systems fail to motivate employees and guide their professional development effectively (Bernardin, Hagan, Kane, & Villanova, 1998; Culbert, 2008; Juncaj, 2002; Patz, 1975; Vara, 2015). More recently, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology described a need to modernize the approach to performance management and that the classic approach to managing employees is not effective (A. Carr & Kline, 2016).

However, proponents of the traditional performance review argue that it serves a necessary function in insuring employee efforts are mapped to the organization's goals via key objectives. In addition, employees want to know how they are performing relative to their peers, and managers must be able to identify the organization's most promising future leaders (Mayfield, 1960; Patz, 1975). How is this accomplished without the performance review?

Today's performance evaluation approach by applying management objectives was developed by McGregor's contemporary, Peter Drucker, in his seminal book originally published in 1954 and republished in 1986, *The Practice of Management*. There have been modifications to the management-by-objectives approach, as demonstrated by the countless books and articles discussing and teaching how to write, deliver, and implement performance reviews and feedback. And in a recent cautionary report, the research and consulting firm CEB (previously

Corporate Executive Board; now Gartner) found that removing employee grading through employee rankings had overall negative effect on organizations (CEB, 2017).

Despite its weaknesses and critics, the conventional performance review is, primarily and simply, intended to help an employee do a better job at work (Mayfield, 1960). Executives consider the performance evaluation an important tool to assess employees in the broader context of an organization's mission (Patz, 1975). What alternative, no matter what it is called or renamed, can take the place of a performance review? The performance review ideally provides important insight in a systematic approach to describe how well an employee is performing or whether the employee needs additional support. Performance reviews are to support the employee focus on the mission and objectives of the organization, and they can provide an important link between behavior and work results. Without the performance review, the employee may lack a clear understanding of where he or she sits in terms of meeting the expectations of the organization or her direct supervisor. Performance reviews allow the organization to potentially gain a broad understanding of the performance of its workforce. These goals are theoretically made possible with performance evaluations.

Furthermore, contemporary advocates of the performance review emphasize the importance of fairness, transparency, and professional development (Goler, Gale, & Grant, 2016). In other words, the evaluator, the instrument/form, and the process must be perceived of as fair and credible by the individuals being evaluated. Transparency is an important characteristic of the performance review to ensure the perception of credibility.

It is difficult to imagine a professional world without performance evaluations, particularly considering that performance is assessed at the earliest stages in our society, including our education system. As schoolchildren we were evaluated on such measures as sharing and citizenship, which evolved into grades in core coursework, and then grade point averages. As a result, being assessed and reviewed in the workplace seems familiar. What would the professional workplace look like without performance evaluations? Furthermore, if assessments

in school are important, should not the same be true for assessments in the workplace? The evaluation method used for performance reviews informs its successful adoption. And to that end, the structure, timing, and administration of the performance review process are key factors towards user acceptance and organizational buy-in (Westerman, Heuett, Reno, & Curry, 2014). Meanwhile, critics of the annual performance review argue that today's conventional performance review process are too infrequent to be effective, and are further weakened by being just once per year, impersonal, top-down, and one-way (Silverman, 2011; Wigert & Harter, 2017).

Performance Review Origins Through Today

In this next section, I will review six areas related to my study: (1) the origins of the performance appraisal; (2) the rationale behind the contemporary performance appraisal; (3) a description of the performance appraisal in action today, including how it is typically applied or administered; (4) the identified flaws or weaknesses of the contemporary performance appraisal as described in the literature; (5) a discussion of selected theoretical frameworks that shape performance appraisal and employee engagement; and (6) how the new performance appraisal technology tool and process developed for this project will address the weaknesses identified in (4).

(1) Origins of the Performance Appraisal

The earliest reports of performance review date back to the third century AD; they were implemented by the Chinese, who set up not only performance appraisal systems but also critiques of their own processes (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). In the United States, the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century triggered a need for productivity assessments in the context of increased manufacturing and production. But World War II is generally regarded as the birth period of today's contemporary annual performance review, when the military instituted a new

process to document and report on productivity of soldiers and employees in the production of goods and materials (Cappelli & Conyon, 2017).

Cappelli and Tavis (2016) also described the need for the military in WWII to score, evaluate, and dismiss poor performers. These authors also cited the beginning of a historical back-and-forth between the shifting goals of the performance appraisal. This push and pull emerged among performance appraisal theorists and practitioners questioning whether performance appraisals should be focused on either employee accountability or professional development. When the U.S. military implemented its system to dismiss poor performers based on productivity, it marked the start of accountability as the dominant focus of performance review. After WWII, the military slightly shifted its focus to identify and rank individuals with the highest potential to become leaders and officers. As a result, performance appraisals moved away from accountability and towards professional development. Then in the 1940s, the United States saw the emergence of the annual performance appraisal most closely to how it appears today, a hybrid of accountability/performance and professional development. Annual performance reviews assessed worker performance and allocated awards based on performance. The 1950s pushed performance appraisals back to a professional development emphasis, and it was during this time that one of the first academic voices of concern emerged in Douglas McGregor.

It was also about this time when General Electric acknowledged that the performance review seemed to try to accomplish too much in one exercise. Consequently, General Electric split appraisals into different conversations to separately address performance from the point of view of *productivity*, and performance from the point of view of *professional development*. General Electric leadership found value in both accountability and development. Meanwhile, from the 1970s through the 2000s, companies and organizations were pulled into the accountability emphasis once more. Because organizations felt increased pressure to objectively award merit pay, the pull to accountability was again prioritized and individual

professional development was deprioritized (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). This was also the time of Jack Welsh's cutthroat approach to accountability, which required mandatory elimination of those employees evaluated lowest and epitomized the high value placed on performance accountability (2001). In other words, an employee could be a poor colleague professionally or a disliked manager, but if sales numbers were high, the employee was praised. Productivity metrics mattered most during this time. Meanwhile, Jim Collins's book *Good to Great* was published during this same period of time, echoing themes from General Electric that the bottom line and profit dictate the great modern organization. I argue that this marked the beginning of the performance appraisal revolution that continues today. It is a continuing debate to better define the purpose of the performance appraisal, how it should be delivered, and whether it should exist at all (Baker, 2013; Buckingham & Goodall, 2015; Chandler, 2016; Coens & Jenkins, 2002; Culbert, 2008; Kirner, 2006).

Also during this time, organizations became flatter structurally, with supervisors having more direct reports. The result was less time invested in professional development for both employees and supervisors (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). Eventually, in 2011, Kelly Services, Adobe, and others ended annual performance reviews, pushing the conversation back to professional development and frequent, less formal feedback. Some organizations that eliminated performance reviews during the 1990s and 2000s also stopped the process of ranking employees or grading them all together (Coens & Jenkins, 2002). And then during the 2010s, Deloitte, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and others reinstated rankings while trying to find a middle ground with professional development (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016; Cunningham, 2015; Morris, 2016).

More recently, CEB, the research and consulting firm now part of the Gartner Group, found that removing employee grading had overall negative effects on organizations (CEB, 2017). Their survey also found that only 4% of surveyed HR leaders felt performance reviews accurately assessed employee performance. Furthermore, the report also indicated that

managers lack the skill to manage employee performance without the performance review, suggesting a dilemma: on the one hand, HR leaders believe they must have records and an internal mechanism to rate employees for merit and promotions, but these HR leaders also recognize the limited effectiveness of annual performance reviews, and the low skill among managers to manage performance without formal appraisals.

Thus, it appears the controversy around the annual performance review has reemerged, or perhaps it never went away. The contemporary criticism of and skepticism about the annual performance review has some scholars and practitioners recommending that it be entirely abolished (Baker, 2013; Chandler, 2016; Coens & Jenkins, 2002; Culbert, 2008; Silverman, 2011). Meanwhile, some observers attribute this shift in support for the performance review as merely a cyclical shift in performance management from accountability to learning and development (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). For the University of California and perhaps many other educational institutions and organizations, the annual performance review has become the primary or sole method for the broader effort of performance management (Smith, 1995). Over 90% of companies engage in some kind of performance appraisal process, and 72% reported that they conducted performance reviews annually (Longenecker et al., 2014a; Saba & Bourke, 2010).

A sample of the University of California's annual performance review form can be found as Appendix 1. No documented background or rationale could be located describing the current form's specific origins or rationale for its use. Nevertheless, I summarize the form's layout and describe its content. At the top of the form, "Period Covered By This Appraisal" indicates the time the appraisal covers, which is typically a period of 1 year, although in this example, which is a redacted version to protect the anonymity of the individual being evaluated, the period is about nine months. One major criticism of the conventional performance review is the rarity of the event. The stakes of a single documented review increase the significance of the review as the sole documented evaluation. A single review in 1 year may also lead to recency bias, where

only the most recent job performance is discussed and the performance from 8 months ago is

forgotten or de-emphasized (McGregor, 1957; Wigert & Harter, 2017).

Evaluation standards are presented in five categories with limited definitions:

E = Exceptional. Performance well exceeds expectations and is consistently
outstanding.
A = Above Expectations. Performance is consistently beyond expectations.
S = Solid Performance. Performance consistently fulfills expectations and at times
exceeds them.
I = Improvement Needed. Performance does not consistently meet expectations.
U = Unsatisfactory. Performance is consistently below expectations. Deficiencies should
be addressed as noted in the performance appraisal.

In addition, there is an additional rating to describe the importance of evaluation factors,

corresponding to 1 (*moderately important*), 2 (*very important*), or 3 (*critical*). The evaluation

proceeds to describe the individual's job functions as found in the position/job description.

Importantly, most job descriptions do not include performance expectations; rather, job

descriptions provide an explanation of the type or nature of the job responsibilities without

quantifiable goals or achievement milestones.

The performance review form lists eight characteristics or standards:

1. JOB KNOWLEDGE: Evaluate the use of information, procedures, materials,

    equipment, and techniques required for current job.

2. QUALITY: Evaluate the accuracy, completeness, and follow-through of work.

3. PLANNING/ORGANIZING: Consider effectiveness in response to varying work

    demands, through developing efficient methods, setting goals and objectives,

    establishing priorities, and utilizing available resources.

4. PRODUCTIVITY: Evaluate the volume and timeliness of work based on the

    resources available to accomplish departmental/unit goals and priorities.

5. INITIATIVE/INNOVATION: Evaluate the self-starting ability, resourcefulness, and

    creativity to formulate and propose innovate solutions and improvement to the duties

    of the position.

6. TEAMWORK/COOPERATION: Consider effectiveness of working relationships with other employees, students, and faculty to solve problems, improve work processes, share information and resources, and accomplish specific tasks in a professional and ethical manner.

7. DEPENDABILITY: Consider punctuality, regularity in attendance, meeting deadlines, and performing work without close supervision.

8. COMMUNICATION: Evaluate the clarity of ideas expressed, effectiveness of oral and written presentations, and listening to and interacting with others in a helpful, informative, and professional manner.

Following these categories and scores, an "Overall Appraisal Rating" is presented using the evaluation criteria standards E, A, S, I, or U, for exceptional, above expectations, solid performance, improvement needed, or unsatisfactory, respectively. The form then allows the supervisor an opportunity to provide written comments and describe future plans, actions, or goals. Finally, the employee may provide comments about his or her own performance or the evaluation itself.

There are no California laws specifying the requirement of performance reviews; rather, the legal requirement for them is supported through organizational policy. In the case of the University of California's personnel policies for staff members, Policy PPSM 23, "Performance Management" (Appendix 2), states,

> The performance of each employee shall be appraised at least annually in writing by the employee's immediate supervisor, or more frequently in accordance with local procedures. . . .
>
> The written performance appraisal is an opportunity for the supervisor and employee to review whether previously discussed performance expectations and goals have been met, to discuss professional development opportunities, and to identify options for acquisition of additional skills and knowledge to foster performance improvement and career growth. Additionally, the appraisal provides appropriate documentation to support any recommended merit increases and/or other performance-based awards.

Bargaining agreements also specify frequency of performance reviews (i.e., at least annually), who performs the evaluation, a requirement for probationary employees to receive an evaluation, and provisions for nonissuance of performance reviews, among other features and requirements. Examples of performance evaluation provisions for three major bargaining groups are in Appendix 3. This contract as part of the employment agreement effectively becomes the legal justification and requirement for performance reviews.

(2) Rationale Behind the Contemporary Performance Appraisal

Remarkably, there is a lack of scientific evidence examining the actual impact of performance appraisals in the workplace and the appraisal's effect on workplace problems (Cappelli & Conyon, 2017; Indjejikian, 1999). Despite this absence of evidence, 91% of organizations have a performance appraisal process (Saba & Bourke, 2010). As a result, the rationale for the contemporary performance appraisal is primarily based on organizational culture or institutional motivations. Notably, a theoretical question is raised by Cappelli and Conyon (2017) asking whether there is an obligation in the form of a social contract between organization and employee that demands a performance appraisal, but I will not explore that question in this dissertation. I will just accept that many organizations require it, without delving more into its deeper local sociocultural origins and economic motivations.

Generally speaking, performance appraisals today are performed to address one or more of the following five broad functions (Coens & Jenkins, 2002):

1. Describing an individual's performance, often including rating or ranking employees;

2. Coaching, guidance, and professional development needed or recommended for improvement;

3. Supporting compensation decisions;

4. Guiding staffing decisions, including who may be first to be promoted or laid off depending on unit needs and requirements; and

5. Providing legal documentation in the context of discipline.

Perhaps not surprisingly, describing an individual's performance is the central purpose of the performance evaluation (Coens & Jenkins, 2002). In addition, it is an opportunity to provide formal feedback and require a minimum amount of communication about performance between a supervisor and employee. How productive is the individual? Does the individual achieve expected goals? Does the individual's performance align with the objectives of the unit? What were the individual's total outputs over the last performance period, and was that more or less than expected? These are the types of questions asked and answered when describing an individual's performance.

Employee performance is typically documented in a form designed by the organization's HR office, or its chief executive or designee. This form drives nearly the entire process for the performance appraisal, including the manner in which the appraisal is administered and prioritization of important characteristics of performance. Performance evaluations typically utilize a standardized, somewhat rigid form that may not capture the relevant metrics or qualities that the supervisor finds important (Wigert & Harter, 2017). Yet the same form is used for a wide variety of employees, even if their jobs are vastly different from one another; in other words, there is little differentiation among employees when it comes to performance appraisals even though job functions vary widely (Cappelli & Conyon, 2017). For example, the form for housekeeping staff can be essentially the same form used for a senior manager (Chandler, 2016). The same is virtually true in the University of California (see Appendix 1, which includes the same performance appraisal form used for represented union employees and professional nonrepresented employees).

Typically, the evaluation form includes a Likert-scale scoring or classification of performance numerically or through categorization of conventional terms. For example, a performance rating using a numerical scale could be 1 for excellent, 2 for satisfactory, and 3 for unsatisfactory performance. A middle score of 1.5 could be used to reflect a performance between excellent and satisfactory. Compare a numerical scoring method for performance to a

categorical assignment such as "exceeds expectations," "adequate performance," and "improvement needed." This method of classification does not allow for further differentiation. Sometimes the ratings of each number include a rubric or reference to the meaning chosen.

Following this assignment of a numerical score or category for performance, some organizations proceed to rank employees in order of job performance in comparison with others. No evidence could be found in the published literature of any higher education institution that numerically ranks their employees in this way. Performance reviews can play an important role in compensation as merit increases, where a higher percentage increase occurs based on higher scoring, are largely based on annual performance reviews. This practice of merit increases is not guaranteed, nor is it consistently administered across campuses or year to year. In more recent years, a 3% pool of funds has been made available, with most people receiving between 2.5% and 3.5% increases largely connected with the annual performance review received. In addition, performance appraisal forms frequently include open fields to provide an opportunity for narrative feedback; other appraisal forms may have opportunities for self-appraisal and appraisal or feedback from others who are not the individual's supervisor (e.g., 360 evaluations where feedback is collected from peers, professional colleagues, and direct reports).

Another area that may come into play is "performance rating creep," or the tendency to always give higher and higher evaluation ratings. There is anecdotal evidence that this occurs primarily to make people feel better about their work even if it is not warranted or as a strategy to give a bigger raise when pay is dependent on the performance review even if the performance for that period of time was not exceptional. Issuing superlative performance reviews when in actuality those ratings had not been earned happens more frequently when there are not merit increases available, and the "exceptional" performance review rating is a tactic to make the employee feel better despite there being no additional increase in pay. I have also observed in my professional setting that faculty supervisors tend to give higher

performance review scores than staff managers, and I speculate this is to avoid any difficult conversation with the employee about less than an "exceptional" review or risk employee morale with less than a "perfect" evaluation. This phenomenon of performance review score inflation is most similar to grade inflation in the education evaluation setting.

Grade inflation has been described in three ways: static, dynamic, and differential (Tyner & Gershenson, 2020). Static grade inflation when there is discordance between the grade and content mastery. In the context of an annual performance review, this may occur when a supervisor wants to avoid giving a lower score to an employee or facing a difficult conversation. In such a case, the supervisor may inflate the evaluation score as a result. Meanwhile, dynamic grade inflation occurs when the meaning of the grade changes over time as a trend. Instead of giving annual performance reviews scores of "solid performance" for an employee's accomplishments, the office may experience a more challenging year overall due to external factors and be unable to meet goals set; still, the supervisor gives evaluations of "exceptional performance" even if not entirely warranted. Finally, differential grade inflation occurs when different standards are applied to students, potentially leading to serious consequences for different student groups with similar characteristics. In the staff evaluation world, this could be similar to how employees who are supervised by faculty may experience differential grade inflation compared with employees who are supervised by experienced staff managers.

Another approach to grade inflation considers it a consequence of a failed "self-esteem movement" originating in the 1970s around the Vietnam War and persisting today. The movement includes the notion that grading is hierarchical and subjective, reducing students' self-esteem and, as a result, their learning (Klafter, 2019). In the context of employee performance reviews, the same may be true in that for many managers, performance is subjective, and a negative performance review could reduce employees' self-esteem and, as a result, their future performance.

17

In terms of prioritization of performance appraisal's purpose, coaching is generally considered second in importance to evaluating employee performance for both the individual being appraised and the organization (Coens & Jenkins, 2002). Coaching and guidance will vary depending on the degree to which the individual is meeting the supervisor's expectations. For example, if the individual is meeting or exceeding the expectations of the supervisor, the coaching may take the form of guidance to learn and develop new skills; new trainings or more challenging projects may be offered as a means to further develop the individual professionally. On the other hand, if the employee is not meeting the supervisor's expectations, the employee may require remediation or retraining on fundamental aspects of the position or the supervisor may redirect the employee to different, simpler tasks with fewer responsibilities.

Depending on the individual organization, performance reviews may impact compensation and promotions (Coens & Jenkins, 2002). Cappelli & Conyon (2017) identified a statistically significant relationship between appraisal scores and a range of employment outcomes including merit pay and bonuses, promotions, dismissals, demotions, and resignations. Typically, the more positive the performance evaluation, the more likely an employee will receive a larger increase in compensation when merit is tied to performance. For some organizations, performance evaluations have no direct relationship to compensation or promotions. However, evaluations could be used to serve as a reference to another department within the organization if the employee is looking to transfer and would report to a new supervisor who is unfamiliar with his or her previous work. In this way, performance evaluations may impact staffing decisions.

Last among the five potential functions of a performance evaluation is legal (Coens & Jenkins, 2002). Some employment agreements require a formal, written performance evaluation. Meanwhile, other organizations provide for a performance evaluation based on written internal employment policies. Sometimes evaluations are used in the context of supporting disciplinary action (Baker, 2013). The legal requirement for annual performance

reviews is contractually established in bargaining agreements for the University of California's affected employees. Although not all employees are unionized and represented, by adding specific provisions into university policies, standards, and work expectations, the requirement for annual performance reviews is recognized in employment law.

On their face, these five functions seem invaluable to the employee, the supervisor, and the organization. But the conventional performance review often fails to effectively perform these functions. We will discuss this in part 4 of this section when we discuss the flaws and weaknesses of the performance appraisal.

It bears repeating that the five broad functions of the performance review are to (1) describe an individual's performance; (2) coach, guide, and develop professionally; (3) support compensation decisions; (4) guide staffing decisions; and (5) provide documentation in the context of discipline as needed. In this study, I will not address all five of these broad functions directly. If adopted, TEAMMATES could support a similar compensation-based model to the annual performance review or support management in guiding staff decisions, but the outcomes of this study are not focused on compensation, guiding staff decisions, or providing disciplinary documentation. TEAMMATES could be a helpful tool indirectly supporting these goals, but this is not its primary purpose. Rather, TEAMMATES allows for employees and supervisors to self-evaluate and evaluate each other, and produces a narrative description as well as score of performance (Broad Function 1). I will explore whether evaluations using TEAMMATES may be associated with an improved performance review experience due to the frequency, light touch, and casual tone of questions and topics raised. As a result, the TEAMMATES performance review may also help identify, guide, or support professional development (Broad Function 2) and can serve as legal documentation (Broad Function 5) as needed. Although TEAMMATES and this study avoid the role of the performance review in compensation and staffing decisions, if a supervisor chooses to use TEAMMATES-based performance feedback for these purposes, it may satisfy Broad Functions 3 and 4. The issue of compensation-based and merit-based

performance reviews are not specific emphases of this study. Rather, questions about

compensation and merit are macro questions related to the *purpose* of the performance review

for an organization. On a micro level, the TEAMMATES performance review can be used for

merit and staffing purposes depending on the types of questions selected for the employee and

supervisor. For example, questions about an employee's self-identified (and supervisor-

observed) strengths could point to management or promotion opportunities to fill gaps in an

organization's structure when they occur. In this way, the app-based performance review would

address a key function of the performance review. Again, the question of whether we should

use the performance review for these purposes all together is one I will not explore in this

dissertation.

(3) The Performance Appraisal in Action Today

Today's performance appraisal is highly dependent on format—most commonly a static

paper or electronic form—as a means to document the evaluation. The modern performance

appraisal is typically modeled on *SMART*, which is an acronym for Specific, Measurable,

Actionable, Realistic, and Targeted and is associated with *management by objectives* (C. Carr,

1992; Drucker, 1986).

Management by objectives and SMART established a framework from which all

employees can be directed and assessed. The performance appraisal is the natural tool from

which SMART can be applied. In addition, this method is advocated by the University of

California (2016) in its own trainings (see Appendix 4). Presumably these training materials

reflect the institution's preferred process to establish performance goals, communicate them to

employees, and assess success or failure accordingly.

The University of California training on SMART states: "SMART goals are meant to

address all of your major job responsibilities. Remember, goals are intended to focus attention

and resources on what is most important so that you can be successful in achieving your

priorities. SMART Goals are goals for your day-to-day job." In addition, it describes what each

letter represents (Table 1):

Table 1. SMART Criteria

S	Specific	What will be accomplished? What actions will you take?
M	Measurable	What data will measure the goal? (How much? How well?
A	Achievable	Is the goal doable? Do you have the necessary skills and resources?
R	Relevant	How does the goal align with broader goals? Why is the result important?
T	Time-Bound	What is the time frame for accomplishing the goal?

Drucker (1986) described the importance of both management by objectives and self-

control. We will explore this concept of self-control further in item 5 of this section.

(4) Weaknesses of the Contemporary Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal critics appeared soon after appraisals took their modern form,

and we will discuss many of their concerns here (Kelly, 1958; McGregor, 1957; Patz, 1975).

Today's criticisms of traditional performance appraisals have been researched, described, and

summarized by numerous authors in popular media and scholars as well as industry consultants

such as Gallup (Wigert & Harter, 2017), Deloitte (2015), and CEB (2017). Recent criticisms can

be considered in terms of financial and social costs to an organization. In terms of financial

costs, the time required to complete the performance review—for both the supervisor and

employee—can be substantial. Deloitte calculated two million work hours a year were potentially

wasted in the writing and delivery of its performance reviews (Buckingham & Goodall, 2015).

One could also consider the financial costs associated with HR, including managing the

administration of the performance review process, providing trainings, and working closely with

employees as needed. Additionally, if the performance review was flawed such that it led to

effective legal action against the organization, this would also be a financial cost. Furthermore,

there are potential social costs to the performance review as a result of poor execution or

delivery of the evaluation to employees, which could include damage to unit morale and attrition or loss of employees to competitors. At the heart of these criticisms is the lack of clear evidence that performance reviews are effective at actually improving performance (Baker, 2013).

The performance review is commonly seen today as a single event per year. Compared with the broader activity of performance management, which implies an ongoing process not limited to an annual review, the performance review criticisms can be presented into four broad categories:

1. Supervisor preferences and ability
2. The performance evaluation form
    a. Performance ratings
    b. Performance criteria
    c. Forced rankings
3. Frequency of evaluation
4. Pay and promotion

Supervisor preferences and ability. The first concern broadly is supervisor preferences and ability. Supervisor resistance can take several forms such as the overall resistance to, or dislike of, judging and evaluating a colleague. As McGregor (1957) pointed out in his seminal critique of performance reviews, managers do not like to play God. Most managers do not like to judge others, nor do managers want to face complaints or other repercussions from employees who receive a lower rating than they feel they deserve. An evaluation that is perceived as unfair can have a negative effect on employee morale, not just for the individual evaluated but for others, particularly if employees discuss their evaluations with others to build alliances against the supervisor. The supervisor's avoidance of conflict or complaints should not be underestimated. For example, a manager who has an underperforming employee may still give that employee a "satisfactory" rating or higher, if that is what the employee is expecting, to avoid a difficult conversation or encounter. Furthermore,

among some organizations, if the supervisor gives a low rating to an employee, the supervisor

must provide special written documentation and perform additional work. This prospect of

additional work and the emotional hassle to give a lower rating likely influences many managers

to give higher ratings than are deserved. Notably, the same additional work is true of

exceptional or superlative ratings. Some supervisors are required to provide additional

documentation or evidence supporting the highest rating. Consequently, ratings could easily be

biased to minimize the amount of work for the manager and not accurately reflect the

extremes—the overperformers or the underperformers.

 Nevertheless, we accept grading to some extent as part of the workplace contract. After

all, critics argue, unlike in school, workplace evaluations like the performance review rely on

subjective judgments and are inherently biased. These critics believe that the decision-making

process can be distorted by personal feelings, the halo effect, and other biases. Indeed, unlike

for an academic course, which at the beginning sets out in plain terms the emphasis areas and

weightings that will lead to an A grade, there is typically no similar presentation for new hires.

 Scholars, performance management practitioners, and consultants cite a lack of

supervisor training in performing performance appraisals as a weakness of the process. (CEB,

2017; Longenecker, Fink, & Caldwell, 2014b; Longenecker & Gioia, 2000). These trainings

include, but are not limited to, establishing and tracking goals and providing evaluation results to

employees through the interview process (Laird & Clampitt, 1985).

 Even if supervisors are trained properly, which is not well-defined, researchers have also

found sociopolitical biases in the administration of performance evaluations, including one study

that found that 58% of supervisors intentionally manipulated employee ratings to avoid a

confrontation with an employee (Longenecker & Gioia, 2000). That same study also reported

that 35% of supervisors manipulated employee ratings due to organizational pressure to keep

ratings low, 29% manipulated results to make themselves look good, and 23% intentionally

ranked an employee in order to curry favor with the employee (i.e., increase employee loyalty).

The results of this study build from a previous one by the same author that found that over 70% of supervisors intentionally raised or lowered ratings to scare better performance from the employee, to influence a merit increase (upwards or downwards), or to comply with an organizational requirement that discourages supervisors from giving too-high ratings (Longenecker & Ludwig, 1990). In addition, researchers have found that the inherent subjectivity of the process of evaluation can lead to performance rating inflation (Laird & Clampitt, 1985).

Culbert (2008) and Chandler (2016) questioned whether this ability to act in the judgment of others—an unavoidable aspect of the annual performance review—causes more harm than no written performance evaluation at all. Culbert (2015) offered this mind exercise: imagine you gave your spouse an annual performance review…how would that impact your relationship? Most would think such an exercise would be hurtful to the spouse and extremely damaging to the relationship. Yet we do mandate performance reviews of our coworkers and expect good outcomes. Absent the complete elimination of the performance review, the next alternative is to improve it.

The halo effect is another potential bias that can influence supervisor performance ratings. In the halo effect, an employee's first or early-in-the-job positive performance has a disproportionate positive perception effect on the supervisor. The supervisor then bestows this proverbial halo onto the angelic employee. When the employee performs even just adequately, lavish praise may be given. Alternatively, when the employee falters, the supervisor creates (or more readily accepts) excuses for the employee. The halo effect should not be underestimated, and I must continually reflect on whether I am biased as a supervisor for any given employee. The bias of halo effect has a lesser known—but equally challenging to supervisors—associate, the pitchfork effect (also known as the horn effect). The pitchfork effect relies on the same cognitive bias theory as the halo effect, except the early performance impressions are overall negative. An employee who is a victim of the pitchfork effect may underperform on a single early task and have future performances marked and skewed in a negative fashion. The same

excuse accepted for a halo employee would be rejected for a pitchfork employee, which the supervisor would describe as just another example of the pitchfork employee's underperformance.

Perhaps the most prevalent bias in performance ratings is personal bias, also known as the "idiosyncratic rater effect." This bias covers a broad range of influences but can be best described as supervisors tend to rate more favorably those with the same work style as themselves. In addition, it is difficult to detect, as personal bias can be camouflaged as a new employee simply "not fitting in." I include unconscious bias in this category as it relates to critical race theory and sexism, and will describe this aspect in more detail later in this dissertation. For instance, the descriptor of "abrasive" is applied more often to describe women compared with men, who may exhibit the same behavior yet not have it mentioned in their evaluation (Goler et al., 2016). Personal bias can begin as early as the recruitment process. Often when hiring, interviewers tend to gravitate to those whose professional background, demeanor, or style is similar to their own. Once hired and in the context of evaluations, supervisors who evaluate may judge more favorably those who are perceived as more similar compared with those who are perceived as dissimilar, whether it be due to more closely matching work experiences, college attendance, religion, or other personal factors.

Furthermore, supervisor resistance also comes in the form of conflict avoidance and the anticipation of conflict from either providing feedback to an employee that will be negative or feedback that is less positive than the employee feels is fair.

Another criticism of performance reviews centers on the idea that supervisors are simply not capable of properly evaluating their employees due to lack of training, but even if it is a learnable skill, the psychological or subjective nature of the process negatively impacts the evaluation. Because the evaluation cannot be free of this bias, the evaluation is not credible and not legitimate.

The performance evaluation form. The second broad criticism centers on the performance evaluation form itself. I divide this criticism into three parts: performance ratings, performance criteria, and forced rankings. Performance evaluations typically utilize a standardized, somewhat rigid form that may not capture the relevant metrics or qualities that the supervisor finds important (Wigert & Harter, 2017). Yet the same form is used for a wide variety of employees even if their work is vastly different from one another. For example, the form for housekeeping staff is essentially the same form used for a senior manager (Chandler, 2016). This cookie-cutter-approach performance review form fails to recognize unique positions or responsibilities in a broad array of units within an organization. The standardized forms also fail to highlight major priorities of the specific unit or individual supervisor.

An additional criticism of the form is that it attempts to support professional development, coaching, and performance to inform meritorious recognition (e.g., pay increases). To that end, one study found that there were too many uses for the form—that it was trying to accomplish too many things at one time (Laird & Clampitt, 1985). In other words, does the performance evaluation form primarily serve to document professional development or as discipline/recognition? If one supports the idea that the performance review must prioritize development over discipline/recognition, it is important to define the objectives of the performance review clearly. Yet research has found difficulty in defining the objectives clearly, in part because of this tension between performance evaluation goals of professional development and discipline/recognition (Laird & Clampitt, 1985).

Another weakness of performance review form relates to the ratings system applied within the form (Wigert & Harter, 2017). Critics argue that the criteria used and the manner in which employees are reviewed are deeply flawed.

Because the University of California annual performance review is populated with the words from the job description, immediately one can see a problem. Job descriptions usually lack specific performance expectations; instead, job descriptions spell out functions and tasks,

skills, knowledge, and attributes minimally necessary to perform the job. There may also be

descriptions of job responsibilities, but the job description misses quantifiable performance

measures. Consequently, there is an incongruity between the purpose of a job description and

that of a performance evaluation form, yet the former feeds into the latter. The University of

California performance evaluation form can be criticized for overly standardizing the

performance criteria and reducing the effectiveness of the annual performance review.

Arguably, the form is too rigid and cannot sufficiently serve well all of the varied positions in the

university. There is little room for individualization, which may be needed because of the

diversity of types of jobs at the organization; each job may have specific performance

expectations. For example, work with key performance measures such as total sales as

measured in dollars is more easily quantified. But many university positions have work

performance that is not easily quantified, such as work requiring skills like effective

communication, teamwork, creativity, and leadership. These functions carry a level of

performance subjectivity and may not be explicitly called out in the job description and therefore

may not appear in the performance review. Wigert and Harter (2017), the authors of Gallup's

recent white paper, *Re-Engineering Performance Management*, describe the situation:

> More than ever, employees tend to work in dynamic environments where their
> responsibilities are continually changing. Even employees in similar roles often have job
> demands that are increasingly different from their peers' job demands. These new
> requirements of the modern workplace require a more dynamic, individualized approach
> to understanding performance expectations and delivering stronger performance. (p. 7)

Despite this new dynamic work environment and individualized approach, the performance

review criteria are trapped in an antiquated form that is cookie-cutter, lacks relevancy by

focusing on job description and not job performance, and fails to set clear goals for the

employee at the beginning of the performance review period.

The last area of weakness according to Gallup and others is forced rankings (Coens &

Jenkins, 2002; Wigert & Harter, 2017). Although not commonly found in the university setting,

this practice essentially further delineates those in each categorical rating by rank order—for

example, among the "Exceptional Performers" category, who is the best, second, third, fourth, etc. There are several criticisms to this practice, which was popularized in the last quarter century by Jack Welch, the infamous former CEO of General Electric, who required his organization to regularly and systematically fire the lowest ranked employees every year.

Critics argue that ranking employees is impractical and unrealistic as different supervisors with their own employees cannot compare one another's employees against each other objectively. Setting aside for a moment the question of whether the ratings of the employees were valid, fair, and completely unbiased, how does one distinguish a lower ranked employee who was rated an "Exceptional Performer" in student affairs with a higher ranked employee who was rated "Above Expectations" in the transportation department?

In addition, ranking employees can lead to competition among employees and negative behavior, which harms the concept of teamwork and collaboration. If employees see one another as competition, they may resist helping others and prioritize their individual success over their coworkers.

The form and scoring are often connected to merit increases in pay, which is the current practice at the University of California. As a result, the stakes of receiving a higher evaluation score grow in importance to the employee. To the employee, the debate over whether the performance review is a professional development tool or a discipline/recognition instrument carries less importance so long as one obtains the highest rating, which will lead to the highest pay increase. As automatic cost of living adjustments have gone away, the small amount of potential money for increases to be spread across all employees via the performance review becomes more competitive.

Frequency of evaluation. A third criticism targets the infrequency of the performance evaluation, typically just once per year. This arbitrary annual cycle is not rooted in scientific evidence, and furthermore, because of its infrequency, invites bias because activity, achievements, or problems in the last 6 months are what the supervisor remembers most as a

28

result of recency bias (Chandler, 2016). When the performance review is perceived as a rare event, and one's financial interests are at stake, the frequency of evaluation has at least an indirect impact on the perception that the performance review may be flawed because it is capturing few moments over the year, calling into question the review's ability to accurately reflect the entire year.

Pay and promotion. A fourth criticism of the performance review is related to its impact on pay and promotion decisions. Organizations commonly link pay or promotion decisions to performance reviews, which seems reasonable on its face. However, there are unintended consequences of employees engaging in behavior for the sole aim of increased pay or promotion. For example, if pay increases are tied to performance evaluations, and that is sufficient motivation, employees may prioritize those activities at the expense of other important aspects of their position that are not included in the performance evaluation. For example, teamwork or professionalism may not be emphasized in the performance evaluation, but they are important to the health and success of the organization.

A corollary to this critique is that the pay increase differentials—that is, the difference in pay value between one evaluation rating and another—can actually become a disincentive if the difference in pay increase is lower than employee expectations. I can provide a real-life example: one year, HR determined that those who were rated "Meets Expectations" would receive an increase of base pay of 2.95%, those rated "Consistently Above Expectations" would receive an increase of 3.00%, and those rated "Consistently Exceeds Expectations" would see an increase of 3.05%. There was widely heard criticism of this distribution, particularly from those who saw little difference between 2.95% and 3.05% in actual dollars. High-performing staff questioned whether their achievements were valued, and others simply felt insulted. There is a growing segment of supervisors who feel performance evaluations should not be associated with pay increases, and that promotions into new or more advanced positions should instead be the primary mechanism by which pay is increased.

These criticisms and weaknesses can be viewed another way in terms of a performance review theoretical framework. Patz (1975) provided two types of hindrances to successful performance reviews: systemic and behavioral barriers. Systemic barriers refer to the institutional hindrances such as the appraisal forms or process itself, whereas behavioral barriers are more directly influenced by fears, concerns, and biases. There are similarities to what others, including Wigert and Harter (2017), described as weaknesses of the conventional performance review. I summarize Patz's observations in Table 2.

Table 2. Barriers to Successful Performance Reviews

Systemic Barriers	
Collection obstacles	• Performance review assessments are too qualitative • Rating scales, when numerical, too narrow. Recommends a 10-point scale or differentiation not easily performed • Incomplete or haphazard collection not showing changes in assignment that could impact the performance review • HR does not prioritize dissemination, collection of performance reviews
Analysis obstacles	• Good data are difficult to collect and analyzing that data is even more difficult without a centralized system
Behavioral Barriers	
Political barriers	• Executive suspicion that superiors report false information—consciously or subconsciously—about subordinates • Too favorable reviews of employees increase the chances that that employee could be promoted outside of the unit • Reporting weak employees can warrant some sympathy and additional support from executive leadership
Interpersonal barriers	• The ever-present dislike of the face-to-face judging of one's colleagues • Fear of providing a negative appraisal will lead to worse performance

Note. HR = human resources. Adapted from Patz (1975).

Perhaps performance review at a university workplace could borrow from more conventional classroom approaches to learning and evaluation, such as formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments follow student learning and provide regular feedback from teachers and students to improve learning (Carnegie Mellon University, 2016).

This can be achieved through helping students identify strengths and helping teachers detect where a student may have problems. Formative assessments are not graded in the conventional sense, which could be comparable to the coaching and professional development aspects of the performance review. Meanwhile, summative assessment is how student learning is evaluated. Typically, this evaluation comes in the form of a quiz, exam, or paper that demonstrates the learning quantitatively. The performance review as a measuring function of performance—rather than ongoing coaching or developing—serves as the summative assessment. Much like a midterm or final exam, the key to the professional performance review is that the evaluated person must know the scope of the assessment and how the assessment will be conducted.

An additional function of the performance review is to serve as documentation for legal purposes, such as when an employee may need to be terminated or if an employee is promoted outside of an open recruitment process. It is a common misconception that one must wait for a poor performance review to dismiss an employee. Furthermore, it is common for all positions at a public university to have open postings that allow all interested and qualified applicants an opportunity to apply for consideration. In the case of disciplinary action, some employees who are represented by unions will turn to the performance review on file as support for an employee's performance when it is challenged. But a performance review only provides a snapshot in time of an employee's performance. A supervisor can document declining performance in a variety of ways, including emails, performance counseling memoranda, and so on. An annual performance review does not carry particular weight from this point of view. For example, Employee William may have had a solid performance 6 months ago, but now he's showing up late and not keeping up with his work; this can easily be documented and render the previous performance review less important. Furthermore, the performance review provides potentially important information for an organization when considering internal promotions. If a hiring manager in another unit wants assurance that a new hire who currently works for the

company has satisfactory performance, the hiring manager may turn to the employee's personnel file to review the latest performance reviews.

There is wider debate surrounding the role of compensation and whether pay ought to be linked to the performance review (Indjejikian, 1999; Longenecker & Fink, 2017a). Essentially the prevailing arguments center on two approaches. The strongest argument for linking pay with performance is that the employee clearly understands the priorities of the organization in terms of productivity and places emphasis on those tasks and objectives. On the other hand, focusing on only the performance review may cause supervisors to overlook important characteristics of an employee that are not well measured by the performance review, such as teamwork, creativity, or integrity. Furthermore, when tying pay to the performance review, employees may shift all attention to simply getting the highest review and pay increase without regard for other important community contributions such as teamwork and integrity.

In the world of performance management, it is appropriate and necessary to establish performance standards. Drucker and others have established the following criteria when setting management by objectives in the context of performance appraisal (Drucker, 1986; Longenecker & Fink, 2017):

- Objectives are determined with the employee's input.

- Objectives may be measured quantitatively and qualitatively.

- Objectives should be challenging and motivating.

- Regular feedback is given instead of static management reports.

- Rewards (e.g., recognition, appreciation and/or performance-related pay) for achieving the intended objectives are a requirement.

- The priority is on professional growth and development.

The approach of management by objectives requires that expectations be established and performance be measured against those expectations. The most pessimistic thinking about

eliminating performance evaluations altogether is that it would result in a workplace where everyone would produce minimal effort in their tasks as no one could be held accountable without expectation setting.

Early defenders such as Mayfield (1960) supported the notion of more frequent "progress interviews" implying that performance reviews should not simply be an isolated annual event. Although face-to-face was the preferred method, communication options have dramatically changed over the years, including videoconferencing, live-chat texting, and workplace profile updates to keep employees aware of one another's activities and projects (Salesforce, 2017). Although there may be times that a face-to-face interaction is best during a performance review, new technologies and methods now exist that may be underutilized and more appropriate depending on the situation, culture, or individual's preferences.

Chandler (2016) challenges the notion that modern performance management, and therefore performance evaluations, broadly fails to engage people and therefore has the opposite of its intended effect. Evaluations could trigger a fight-or-flight mentality, and that defensiveness results in poorer performance. Open and honest communication is unlikely in such a scenario. Performance reviews tend to dwell on negative performance. Furthermore, there is a false assumption that the performance of an individual can be quantified to the extent that individual performance translates into team performance. Perhaps objective performance is simply not attainable.

Advocates of the traditional performance review process argue that it is a logical extension of performance management, which serves three purposes: professional development, reward/compensation, and drive organizational performance (Chandler, 2016). Furthermore, performance reviews can tell employees how they compare to others, but is predicated on honest and unbiased assessments. Furthermore, performance reviews should be delivered in a caring, nonpunitive manner (Block, 2002).

(5) Selected Theoretical Frameworks That Shape Performance Appraisal and Employee

Engagement

One of the foundational theories related to the use of performance appraisal in the

workplace is *attribution theory* (Gedeon & Rubin, 1999):

> Attribution theory is part of cognitive social psychology and focuses on the human
> propensity to explain *why* people behave the way they do…. The relevance of attribution
> theory in performance evaluations is obvious. It is natural for those who observe
> performance and who are responsible for the actions of others to try to explain why
> employees perform the way they do. The attempt to explain such behaviors may
> significantly involve psychological attributions. (p. 20)

A corollary to attribution theory is *received doctrine*, which is described as when

assumptions and ideas become ingrained such that they are accepted as truth and are no

longer questioned (Carson, Cardy, & Dobbins, 1991). Connected with the received doctrine

theory are three key assumptions:

1. Employees differ significantly in their contributions at the workplace.

2. Differences in performance must be at least partially explained by individual
   employees themselves such as ability and motivation.

3. Evaluators must be willing and able to identify performance variation and base
   evaluations only on outcomes within the individual's control.

Evaluators must exercise awareness of performance differences as a result of individual

characteristics or skills, more advanced equipment or systems, or advantages associated with

work condition or available resources. Carson et al. (1991) performed an experiment looking at

two work groups.

Attribution theory assumes that managers understand performance as a function of the

person. However, this causes a conflict when a good performance appraisal is mistakenly

attributed to a person when in reality the system should have been credited. In these cases the

distinction between the individual performance and the system's performance must be made

explicit. For example, if a janitor is given a state-of-the-art vacuum and a colleague is given a

broken broom, an evaluator should not erroneously give the first janitor a better performance review without considering the systems advantage (i.e., using the vacuum and not the broom).

Carson et al. (1991) found a discrepancy between managerial and subordinate beliefs when it comes to system and person effects on performance. It was particularly notable among subordinates who were told they needed to improve performance. Those indicating poor performance of subordinates more often cited system effects for performance rather than person effects. Another conclusion reached by these researchers was that raters do not typically separate system effects from person effects when reaching performance conclusions. If the evaluator improperly attributes poor performance to the person rather than the system, "such managerial actions will not remediate poor performance and will probably cause the subordinate to resent the supervisor" (Carson et al., 1991, p. 156).

The other major framework, *agency theory*, explains how work is organized such that principals (or supervisors) direct agents (employees) to perform tasks needed by the organization (Evans & Tourish, 2016). Agency theory is commonly cited to describe the relationship between supervisor and employee because supervisors both determine the work of others and can make decisions for their agent–employees. The performance appraisal documents how successfully that relationship performs over a given period of time. However, agency theory also does not fully explain the problems associated with performance appraisals. For example, if the principal dictates the agent's behavior and the agent–employee follows those directions yet the ultimate outcome is poor, when is the principal responsible? A potential conflict of interest arises because the supervisor may choose to blame the employee for poor performance as the employee is an easy target. Why would principals willingly accept blame for poor performance when they could attribute that poor performance to one of their agents instead?

Agency theory has also been interpreted and linked to performance appraisal discussions due to the inherent assumptions that employees have choice and that agency

35

can—with sufficient effort or personal discipline—result in strong performance assessments, and therefore employees have agency over their work and output (Indjejikian, 1999). Put another way, if an employee knows what will lead to a strong performance evaluation, the assumption is that the employee has the means and abilities to act in such a way as to attain those goals.

I will discuss five other key theories that are associated with job satisfaction and motivation.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been applied to work settings (Maslow & Frager, 1987; Pardee, 1990). In the hierarchy of needs pyramid, lower level needs must be met before seeking higher level needs. In this way, physiological needs, such as food and shelter, are more important than social needs (e.g., friendship) or self-actualization (e.g., desire to self-improve and contribute to one's own development). Frederick Herzberg is credited with applying Maslow's hierarchical approach of human motivation and needs to workplace motivation (Pardee, 1990). Herzberg differentiates motivating factors (also known as satisfiers) from hygiene factors (dissatisfiers). Satisfiers include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth. Dissatisfiers include company policy, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status, job security, and personal life (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1993). There is a belief that three primary psychological states significantly impact worker satisfaction: (1) experiencing meaningful work, in and of itself; (2) experiencing a sense of responsibility for the work and its outcomes; and (3) knowledge of results, or performance feedback (Pardee, 1990). The performance feedback mechanism then emerges as a potentially critical piece to motivation and can have a positive or negative impact.

Douglas McGregor (1960) developed *theory X* and *theory Y* to explain two fundamental archetypes of employees. Those who perform as little work as possible when left unsupervised fall under theory X; meanwhile, theory Y employees performing are inherently highly motivated and perform with little supervision (James, 1985; McGregor, 1960). Furthermore, theory X and

theory Y are strong considerations when applying the organizational practice of management by objectives (Drucker, 1986). Management by objectives combines agency theory, attribution theory, theory X, and theory Y in the context of performance management and appraisals.

Daniel Pink (2011) has theorized that motivation at the workplace is rooted in three essential elements: autonomy, the desire to direct one's own life; mastery, the drive to improve one's abilities in something that matters; and purpose, the desire to serve something bigger than oneself. Furthermore, he differentiates motivation as either intrinsic or extrinsic, such that money or praise would be examples of external motivation, whereas intrinsic motivation comes from within and an inherent satisfaction from the completion of the task itself (Pink, 2011). He further delineates tasks as either routine ("algorithmic") or heuristic. Algorithmic tasks are less interesting and do not demand high levels of creativity; heuristic work tends to have fewer instructions requiring greater levels of creativity to complete them.

Wigert and Harter's (2017) and Pink's (2011) approaches represent theories in action. Furthermore, although we are not attempting to prove these theories work, they offer an important starting point from which to design the app and alternative performance appraisal method. Applying Pink's framework to distinguish between algorithmic and heuristic tasks was useful as I considered this project. The teams participating in this study mostly practice heuristic work, that is, work that is a combination of in-depth analysis and creativity. Compare this work to that of a cashier, which would likely be evaluated on areas such as speed, accuracy, and number of customers served. A performance evaluation of algorithmic tasks is relatively straightforward and quantifiable. However, in this study, one team comprised attorneys who had varying assignments, trainings, and expertise that required complex analyses that could not be easily measured in terms of quality. Furthermore, each assignment may take more time than others and require more independent research than others. The conventional performance appraisal may underperform under this scenario.

In addition, Wigert and Harter's (2017) theoretical framework on engagement may also be important for this project. A key element of the TEAMMATES includes developing evaluation questions together as supervisor and employee and providing the employee the initial opportunity to self-assess when the question is eventually posed, contributing to participatory characteristics found in employee engagement. TEAMMATES provides an important opportunity for the employee to initiate contact and communicate with the supervisor, which directly supports employee engagement. Furthermore, the supervisor is prompted by TEAMMATES to contact the employee, which stimulates engagement. We shall gauge whether participants find these features of the TEAMMATES helpful and an improvement over the conventional performance review.

(6) The New Tool and Process

There are multiple approaches to revising or altering performance review practices for an organization (Baker, 2013; Chandler, 2016; Coens & Jenkins, 2002; Culbert, 2008; Longenecker et al., 2014b). Several scholars and authors support that the form or method required by HR or leadership should be customizable or useful to a particular position, role, or employee (Chandler, 2016). Web-based performance management systems are on the rise, with one study finding 71% of companies surveyed had one in place and the reason for nonadoption of technology was that companies are not prepared to invest in this area (Lawler, Benson, & McDermott, 2012).

A key feature of TEAMMATES allows appraisers and those receiving appraisals to design their own systems, reflecting the importance of mutual engagement in performance expectation setting through performance appraisal customization (Buckingham, 2013; Lawler et al., 2012). Buckingham (2013) advocates for a "super light touch," which translates into a weekly or monthly focus in contrast to a once-a-year event. Adobe calculated that managers spent 80,000 hours a year conducting performance reviews and replaced them with less formal "check ins" (Burkus, 2017). Meanwhile, Accenture concluded the time and effort performing

these appraisals for over 300,000 employees did not result in better performance among employees (Cunningham, 2015). Performance appraisals are effective when the system is designed—and the goals are set—jointly by the employee and supervisor (Buckingham, 2013; Lawler et al., 2012; Longenecker & Fink, 2017).

Many scholars and authors have proposed a long list of improvements to the performance review, making implementation of all of suggestions impractical. However, there are several points one ought to consider as we begin to look at changing the performance review. For example, Patz (1975) recommended four steps to improve the performance appraisal:

1. Simplify the performance appraisal between above- and below-average employees. One may accomplish this by eliminating unnecessary gradations among employees. In addition, simplification means not using the performance review to determine level of salary increases; rather, if the performance review is used to determine pay increases, simply make it a binary choice of eligible versus ineligible for an increase.

2. Separate performance reviews from other considerations, such as promotion, pay raises, and discipline.

3. Set boundaries to central collection to minimize bias. A corollary to this is that performance appraisal forms should be unique to the unit and the information collected centrally is whether performance was above or below average and the superior's estimate of management potential.

4. Engage with the employee to ensure the performance review is participative. This requires listening to one another, and the superior must be listening for opportunities to impact performance of the employee being evaluated.

Another feature highlighted was the importance of having an opportunity to self-evaluate, supporting the notion that this is a collaborative process and not simply a top-down review (Longenecker & Fink, 2017; Longenecker et al., 2014a, 2014b).

This study provides an alternative to the current performance appraisal process that employs a widely used method of a once-a-year performance review. Those who seek to change their performance evaluation systems are cautioned to not believe there is a singularly perfect system and instead guide the reevaluation process through three key questions (Barnes-Farrell & Lynch, 2003):

1. What are the primary goals, and are these made clear to the users, recipients, and designers of the new system?

2. Is the design matched with those primary goals? For example, if the goals are team based, the evaluation should reflect team behavior, performance, strengths, and weaknesses.

3. How will the system avoid or minimize potential conflicts between or among goals? For example, if the goal of the appraisal system is to support pay increases, how is that feedback separated from professional development issues?

These scholar–practitioners also recommend reviewing any change to the performance appraisal system through a series of key questions, which are presented in Appendix 5.

As the current appraisal system undergoes review, the new method should reflect the priorities of the organization. Without those priorities clearly articulated, TEAMMATES focuses on employee engagement in the performance review process, ease of use, fairness, and increased feedback and improved communication.

The annual performance review attempts to accomplish too much at one time: from identifying performance deficiencies, to strengths, to professional development needs, to setting performance goals over the next 12 months of employment, and so on. The tool that is being developed and piloted centers on three specific objectives of improving (1) frequency of feedback, (2) quality of performance discussions, and (3) the employee–supervisor relationship and trust.

Frequency of feedback and quality of performance discussions are often cited by scholars, authors, and practitioners as key factors towards meaningful performance appraisal (Adobe, 2017; Buckingham, 2013; Buckingham & Goodall, 2015; Culbert, 2008; Krullaars & Vibeen, 2015; Morris, 2016). The discussion of performance should be separated from the discussion of development (Lawler et al., 2012).

Adobe's Check-Ins. Adobe ended its annual performance reviews in 2012, and replaced them with "lightweight Check-ins," described as "informal, ongoing conversations between managers and employees" that focus "on the future, not the past, with a goal of inspiring everyone to bring their best to the company" (Adobe, 2017). The company estimates saving over 100,000 manager hours as a result of this new performance appraisal approach. TEAMMATES is modeled, in part, after Adobe Check-Ins as well as theoretical approaches to motivation as described by Buckingham (2013), Cappelli & Tavis (2016), and Pink (2011).

Adobe's Check-Ins (2017) emphasize expectation setting, feedback, and professional development, and TEAMMATES has flexibility built into its process based on the questions posed. If the supervisor and employee seek to focus only on expectation setting and feedback, they select question prompts focused on those areas. However, if professional development is an interest, for example, one of the questions may ask about whether there is a training or a new skill that the employee is interested in. That text response would set the stage for a professional development discussion, by text, by email, or face-to-face, between the employee and supervisor.

Whereas the Adobe model describes a quarterly meeting between supervisor and employee at least once per quarter for a duration of 60–90 minutes, by contrast, TEAMMATES is less prescriptive and is anticipated to be less time-consuming and of even lighter weight than Adobe's process. However, TEAMMATES is similar to Adobe in that the interaction is a frequent and two-way feedback process where the employee can share how the supervisor is impacting

the employee's performance, potentially allowing for a discussion about how the supervisor may adjust to better support the employee.

The Need for This Study Today

Performance review—also known as performance feedback or appraisal—is commonly a once-a-year event. As a result, its importance is raised, as the review may be the strongest determinant of whether an employee receives an increase in pay or a promotion and therefore there is a clear financial and economic motivation for obtaining a superb review from one's supervisor (Cappelli & Conyon, 2017; Wigert & Harter, 2017). Meanwhile, to the supervisor or the organization's leadership, the performance review has the potential to serve as the most effective tool for directing and motivating employees toward desired performance and outcomes (Drucker, 1986; Holloway, 1988). We see the first contradiction of the performance review: if only 10% find the performance appraisal an effective use of time, how can it also be important (Buckingham & Goodall, 2015; May, 2015)?

Supporters of the traditional method of performance reviews argue they have more value to the employer and organization than anti-performance review skeptics believe (Cappelli & Conyon, 2017). Researchers have recently found evidence that some employment outcomes, including merit pay, promotions, dismissals, and resignations, are highly associated with appraisal scores (Cappelli & Conyon, 2017). However, missing from their analysis was whether performance evaluations have an impact on morale or actual future performance, presenting an opportunity for this project. Also missing from the analysis was whether final performance review scores were truly reflective of the work performed. We previously discussed the possibility of performance review scoring inflation, whether done to pacify an employee, reduce complaints, or avoid difficult performance conversations. Similar to grade inflation in academic settings, we must recognize the possibility that scores' meanings (1) can change over time, (2) lose the ability to be compared across areas, or (3) may be applied inconsistently based on

group characteristics (e.g., women may be held unfairly to a different standard by their supervisor, compared with male employees). These kinds of grade inflation are called (1) static, (2) dynamic, and (3) differential, respectively (Tyner & Gershenson, 2020).

In addition, researchers highlight the need for additional research exploring what kind of impact performance appraisals have on other workplace outcomes such as workplace satisfaction, engagement, and *actual* performance. Studies examining effects of appraisal scores on certain employment outcomes such as productivity and engagement are rare (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). We do not know whether traditional performance reviews affect performance, and we further do not know the impact of the performance review process on engagement. Still, the prevailing assumption among practitioners is that performance reviews improve performance, despite the lack of scientific evidence.

Employee engagement is a measure highly correlated to productivity and employee retention popularized by Gallup, Inc., and associated practitioners, authors, and scientists (Byrne, 2014; Buckingham, 2013; Harter, Schmidt, Agrawal, Plowman, & Blue, 2016; MacKie, 2014; Rath, 2007; Truss, Alfes, Delbridge, Shantz, & Soane, 2013; Wigert & Harter, 2017). Engagement has roots in Drucker (1986) and is closely connected to strength-based performance development, which employs a theory that if an employee's work is in areas where the employee has strong skills, knowledge, or attributes, then the employee will be more engaged and more productive (Harter et al., 2006; Wigert & Harter, 2017). Unfortunately, there is no clearly established relationship—or known scholarly peer-reviewed study to date— examining the role of the contemporary performance appraisal and engagement or productivity. In other words, many assume the performance appraisal process improves such important workplace outcomes as productivity, efficiency, and engagement, but does it? Although not the focus of my project, this is another worthwhile area of study for the future.

Early Experiences in Changing the Annual Performance Review

Deloitte surveyed 3,000 companies in 100 countries and found that only 10% of the companies indicated that their performance review process was an effective use of their time; an astonishing 50% believed it was of no use at all (May, 2015). Several large companies have abolished or significantly modified their annual performance review process (Coens & Jenkins, 2002). Accenture and Adobe are most often cited in popular media as performance-appraisal mavericks (Cunningham, 2015). Furthermore, Adobe described its experience in great detail, including taking the additional step of publishing its process, including tools, practices, and policies, on a public website and branding it the Adobe Check-In Toolkit[2] (Adobe, 2017; Burkus, 2017; Morris, 2016). Adobe's "Check-Ins" replaced its annual performance reviews and will serve as a framework for my project. I will discuss in more detail later in this dissertation how some of Adobe's approaches have been adapted to suit TEAMMATES.

"Employees that do best in performance management systems tend to be the employees that are the most narcissistic and self-promoting," said Brian Kropp, the HR practice leader for CEB (Cunningham, 2015). Accenture's decision to alter its performance review process was based in part in similar thinking to that of Gap, Medtronic, and Microsoft, with concerns that the traditional performance review had shortcomings such as potentially triggering disengagement and stifles creativity and growth even among those who receive positive reviews.

Practitioners and scholars critical of the traditional performance review see it as time-consuming, overly subjective, soon forgotten, perfunctory, and demotivating (Culbert, 2015). Furthermore, critics point to scholarly work from the time when contemporary performance evaluation gained popularity in the mid-20th century (Kelly, 1958; McGregor, 1957; Thompson &

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[2] The Adobe Check-In Toolkit is available for public use under a Creative Commons open license at https://www.adobe.com/check-in/toolkit/download.html.

Dalton, 1970), and the last decade, citing IBM, GE, Microsoft, and Netflix as successful

companies that abolished or significantly altered their annual performance review processes

(Ewenstein, Hancock, & Komm, 2016).

Given this published literature and the current state of annual performance reviews, I

developed this study to explore whether performance review could be better accomplished

using familiar technology and a light-touch approach.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study introduced a new process and tool using text messaging technology to support performance review called **TE**chnology **A**ssisting **M**ultilevel **MA**nagers **T**o **E**ngage **S**taff (TEAMMATES). The research questions for this study asked:

1. What can be learned about the impact of a new performance appraisal system that used supportive technology in a novel approach for staff at three selected higher education institutions?

2. How can this learning be applied to designing a more effective performance appraisal system?

This chapter describes the methods used, including

- how participants were identified;

- the study procedures followed as part of the intervention that introduces participants to TEAMMATES;

- how data were gathered and analyzed;

- a description of how TEAMMATES worked as a performance review system method/tool, including explanations for key design elements that try to address shortcomings of the annual performance review based on the published literature; and

- potential biases for consideration.

Identifying Participants

I began by talking to department heads from offices I had general awareness about, but with whom I had no direct supervisory relationship. Multiple departments had expressed interest in participating and provided me with contacts of other possible units that might be willing to participate, but I continued to reach out to other offices at other sites, identified new unit directors, and provided them informational letters (Appendix 6). I then talked to any employee or

supervisor who contacted me, provided additional information by phone or email, and set appointments with interested individuals who agreed to participate.

I initially identified prospective participating offices, supervisors, and staff through individual contacts already known as a result of my professional relationships. No offices, departments, or staff who had a direct or indirect reporting relationship to me were asked to participate. University 1 (U1) was my employer at the time of this writing. Alternate word-of-mouth referrals were obtained when professional contacts declined participation or showed no interest in participating. If a unit head agreed to learn more about the study, the unit head was asked for other colleagues who might be willing to participate. This snowball recruitment method is commonly practiced in sociological studies (Merriam, 2009). An information sheet/flyer was developed, along with a recorded PowerPoint presentation. Although three departments from three universities ultimately participated, five offices initially were considered; due to participant dropouts, two offices were eventually eliminated.

The inclusion criterion for staff members and supervisors was established as a minimum of 2 years in the same unit. The reason for this criterion was to ensure each participant had sufficient experience with the local practice of the conventional annual performance review with which to compare the experience with TEAMMATES. This study required inclusion of a paired employee and supervisor as participants. A supervisor with more than one employee participant was also included in the study. The pairing was necessary because the experiment involves collecting feedback from both employee and supervisor to the same questions about the employee's performance. Because pairings were needed, this added a level of difficulty to identifying participants, because both employee and supervisor needed to agree. Four employee participants withdrew from the study after consenting, which also meant their supervisors to whom the employees reported to and who would respond by text to them (n = 3) could not participate. Without employees participating, these supervisors would have no text responses to review or react to, and therefore they was withdrawn from the study. Best efforts

were made to interview any participants who withdrew from the study to determine whether

using TEAMMATES was itself a cause for dropping out, if the prospective research participant

agreed.

An informational letter (Appendix 6), PowerPoint, and video recording were developed

so that prospective participants could learn about the study without obligation prior to speaking

to the researcher. The PowerPoint and video recordings providing summary information about

the study and process were linked in the informational letter. Recipients of the letter were

encouraged to share it and forward it to others within or external to their own department

because the initial goal was to generate as much possible interest as possible from willing

participants. The letter encouraged curious or interested prospective volunteers to contact the

researcher directly, and a personal email address and phone number were provided. When

prospective participants expressed interest, their supervisors were emailed the informational

materials and asked if they would like to participate. For supervisors who initially expressed

interest, the researcher emailed the supervisors' employees separately to inquire whether or

confirm that the employees were interested. (This was done separately to reduce the possibility

of undue pressure or influence on the employees and to help ensure the employees were

participating completely voluntarily.) The study received 32 inquiries, and among those, 28

consented and had initial orientation meetings. Over the course of the study, nine dropped out

or withdrew, resulting in a total of 19 volunteers (11 employee participants and eight

supervisors). No participants had a direct or indirect reporting relationship to the author during

the study. More information about the study participants is provided in Chapter 4 and in Table 3.

Table 3. Study Participants at the Three Sites

	Office 1 (U1)		Office 2 (U2)		Office 3 (U3)		Combined		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Employees	5	0	3	1	1	1	9	2	11
Supervisors	4	0	2	0	0	2	6	2	8
Total	9	0	5	1	1	3	15	4	19

Note. U1 = University 1; U2 = University 2; U3 = University 3.

The Site Selection Process

These three universities were initially identified because the author had worked at each of the sites, but not the specific offices from which participants were selected. Coworkers of coworkers who had no direct or indirect reporting relationship to the author were allowed to participate. The three universities were University of California San Francisco (University 2 [U2]), University of California Davis (University 3 [U3]), and University of California San Diego (U1). Each university had one administrative unit that participated.

The universities chosen shared the following characteristics: public academic institutions in California, Tier I research programs, employers of a large number of individuals (more than 20,000 people). One university was my current university, and the two others were chosen because they represented large (over 20,000) student populations and were in different areas of the state (one urban and one suburban). The offices chosen to participate were similar in that they all had an administrative focus, purpose, or mission. Because the researcher's background was in administration, it seemed most practical to use those professional networks to maximize success at recruitment. The researcher started by providing informational letters to directors and heads of these offices who were familiar to the researcher. These letters could then be forwarded to employees of that unit or discussed during formal or informal meetings or at the discretion of the office's director. The participating office at U1 was the office of faculty HR, the one at U2 was an office focused on student affairs, and the one at U3 was an office of research administration. The reason for selecting these three universities and different types of departments was to ensure a wider variety of employee participants from different areas rather than, for example, only administering TEAMMATES to a single type of office, such as the fundraising development office. Furthermore, selecting these universities added geographic diversity in addition to operational functional diversity, because the offices at different campuses were also different from one another. By including different offices with different missions, priorities, and functions, I hoped that more heterogeneity would make the results more

generalizable, compared with limiting the participants to one type of office or work. Additionally, performing the study at three campuses could potentially support the notion that the results could apply more broadly than just one office from the same university, depending on the actual findings. One goal of this study was to collect feedback from a sufficiently diverse group of participants, which suggested the importance of including staff and supervisors from different professional areas, whether that be in administration, student affairs, housekeeping, or the executive suite.

Study Procedures

In order to participate in the study, participants were asked to

- complete one initial in-person orientation, which included an introduction to the project and provided an opportunity to ask questions (approximately one hour);

- use TEAMMATES text messaging system, which requires only a few minutes of effort about once a month for 6 months; and

- participate in a 1-hour feedback interview at the conclusion of the study.

The total time commitment consisted of responding to five sets of text-message question prompts (requiring approximately 10 minutes for each set of questions) over 6 months, and two 1-hour sessions each for the initial orientation and final feedback. However, the COVID-19 pandemic led to an unexpected lengthening of the study timeline. Although the initial orientation session remained the same, for some participants the five sets of text-message question prompts extended for 9 months rather than the originally intended 6 months. The ultimate study timetable is shown in Table 4; copies of the semistructured interview questions are found in Appendix 7.

Table 4. Study Timetable

Event	Month
Contacting prospective work teams, supervisors, employees	1
Informed consent and develop performance questions for TEAMMATES	2
In-person orientation, first interview	3
Begin TEAMMATES pilot	3
Midpoint check-in by video conference (optional)	6
Final interview	8 or 9

Research participants were compensated with two $25 Amazon gift cards, one during the orientation and the second when completing the study. The reason for offering compensation was to remunerate subjects for the time outside of their normal routine and to offset any inconvenience.

Study Orientation and Consent

Once all participants at a site had been identified, a face-to-face orientation was held with each participant individually (see Table 3 for breakdown of participants). I met via videoconference or in person with all participants, depending on preference; described the study again using the same materials available to them in the informational letter; responded to any questions; and obtained informed consent. Once informed consent was obtained, I asked broad questions about their current performance evaluation criteria (e.g., how did the individual employee expect to be evaluated and how did the supervisor evaluate the employee). In addition, during the initial orientation, I conducted a semistructured survey to gain a sense of current satisfaction with their current performance review process, followed by instructions on how to use TEAMMATES. After all questions had been answered and participants demonstrated an understanding of the project, the orientation session ended. This first meeting was not a key data collection session except for general demographic data. Because the study's primary focus was on perceptions and critical feedback after using TEAMMATES, the feedback and final interview were more important for data collection. A total of 28 individuals attended orientation sessions, but after nine dropouts and withdrawals, 19 participants remained. This

study was reviewed and approved as an exempt protocol by the University of California Davis Institutional Review Board.

TEAMMATES as the Intervention

TEAMMATES sends questions through a text messaging platform to participants, who can then respond to those questions by text. The employee's supervisor is also text prompted with the same questions to assess similarities and differences between the employee and supervisor. This text-message prompt serves as a light check-in on performance and theoretically allows both employee and supervisor to gauge whether there is alignment in performance and/or expectations in work. Study participants were provided with a standard set of questions from which to choose for use in the TEAMMATES platform (Appendix 8), and any question could be changed or modified. These questions and the process followed were modeled in part after Adobe's Check-Ins. Although Adobe's Check-In methodology utilizes a conceptual framework consisting of three areas, the TEAMMATES approach is built on just two concepts (Adobe, 2017). First, there is agreement between employee and supervisor on expectations in terms of deliverables, behavior, or contributions. This is accomplished through mutual understanding of how the employee will be evaluated through the employee and supervisor answering specific questions, and will be described in more detail below. Second, frequent and informal two-way feedback between employee and supervisor will identify how the supervisor can better support the employee to achieve goals.

Question Development

The questions themselves were designed to be casual in tone, light touch, and flexible. Some questions were written as open-ended and nonleading, such that a positive or negative response might result; for example, "Question 10: Was there a time over the last month, your supervisor or coworker did something which surprised you? What happened and why was it surprising?" Other questions asked

for individuals to rate their performance over the last period using a simple three-point Likert scale, "1 = Exceeded goals, 2 = Achieved most goals, 3 = Missed a few goals."

A total of 13 standard questions were presented, some with follow-up questions (see Appendix 8). The questions were mutually agreed upon and no questions were added after the study began so there would be no surprises. Although participants could modify, add, or remove any question, no participants elected that option. Participants were told they could always skip any question without penalty. Researchers and practitioners cite the lack of clear goal setting as a major weakness of the annual performance review (Cappelli & Conyon, 2017; Cappelli & Tavis, 2016; Longenecker & Fink, 2017). As a result, when the performance review process begins, employees do not know what they are being evaluated on—or how they will be evaluated—before the actual evaluation. Early critics of the annual performance review cited the lack of clear expectation setting as a weakness of the process (McGregor, 1957). TEAMMATES requires active participation between the employee and supervisor to discuss in near real time if the performance expectations vis-à-vis the questions asked and answered are being met, as measured in regular and documented intervals when the system initiates a text-message question set.

Some questions were designed to be strength based to highlight an achievement of the employee. For example, "Question 1: Please give an example when you recently provided helpful guidance to a coworker or client? Describe what you did." The goal of this question was to elicit a positive or strength-based reflection from the employee participant. Among all of the questions, there was an opportunity to align supervisor knowledge and awareness to the employee's self-perception. The standard questions were modeled after the Adobe Check-Ins, Q12 Gallup engagement, and 360-style feedback (Adobe, 2017; Harter et al., 2016). The questions were intentionally open-ended and the text responses took as little as 3 minutes to complete, were casual, and did not require overly extensive thought. Text messaging lent itself

to these criteria. Lastly, the set of agreed-upon questions was finalized by each participant

acknowledging final acceptance by email.

Timing of the Questions

Among the 13 standard questions, four or five were selected for each question set. The

TEAMMATES system would text participants' mobile devices once every 5 weeks, selecting

different questions from among the 13 questions in predetermined fashion such that all

questions were asked at least once during the study. During the pandemic, however, there was

an interruption in this cadence, and some text-message prompts were 10 weeks apart. Although

this was not part of the original study design, there was an unintended positive consequence

from the varied timing between text-message prompts: the feature gave participants different

experiences to compare (i.e., more frequent, like 5 weeks, versus less frequent, like 10 weeks).

During the orientation, participants were encouraged to meet face-to-face if desired. This

could occur after a participant received a text-message prompt from the system, or if a

participant wanted to provide additional information after reading a response from the other.

Light-Touch Reports

After the employee participant responded to the TEAMMATES text-message prompt, the

supervisor participant was sent the same questions to provide independent feedback on the

employee. The supervisor would then view the employee response after the supervisor replied.

Both responses were then compiled into a light-touch report; an example can be found in

Appendix 9. Responses are shown verbatim as written by the participants. If no response was

provided, that is indicated in the reports.

This experiment was performed without interrupting normal business performance

review processes for study participants. In other words, employee and supervisor participants

followed their standard local procedures related to performance review, which all included

completing the customary annual performance review. Participating in TEAMMATES was in addition to their regular performance management processes.

Feedback Interview and Data Analysis

After five sets of question prompts and responses, which occurred over the course of 6 to 10 months, feedback interviews were conducted. These interviews followed semistructured scripts (see Appendix 7).

The individual interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for common themes. This study is a basic qualitative study, specifically a qualitative case study as described by Merriam (2009). I followed the general interview guide approach for outlining a key set of issues conforming to a list of topics and themes to be covered so no major topics were missed (Patton, 2002). The questions posed were generally open-ended, and I followed up with clarifying questions based on the initial responses. I asked about experience and behavior, opinion and value, feeling, knowledge, sensory and background/demographic questions (Patton, 2002). I then sorted categories and data, following this by content analysis and induction. In addition, I tracked the frequency of responses between participants and supervisors. Furthermore, I manually tallied and tracked key words, patterns, and themes from the interviews and focus groups that could help address my research questions.

I followed a step-by-step process of analysis beginning with category construction and assigning codes to pieces of data through content analysis (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The first step of this process was to develop a classification and coding framework. I used my own manual color coding, then classified terms and issues as substantive where appropriate. Understanding there was a certain amount of subjectivity in this process, the goal was to better understand how TEAMMATES as a tool for supervisors and employees was perceived and how it could be improved. Finally, I employed comparative analysis to link the themes to a logical conclusion (Patton, 2002).

How TEAMMATES Works

Researchers have found that efforts to improve the current annual performance review should focus on the mechanism of optimizing feedback delivery and high quality informal feedback (A. Carr & Kline, 2016). In addition, the performance feedback process must be user-friendly and job relevant (Longenecker & Fink, 2017). Other practitioners and scholars de-emphasize SMART feedback and instead focus on work competencies such as teamwork, knowledge, innovation, and creativity (Buckingham, 2013; CEB, 2017; Culbert, 2008). Furthermore, there are additional methods to communicate with employees, and some research has been performed on technology effectiveness when delivering performance feedback, including one study that examined text messages as a means to communicate (Westerman, Heuett, Reno, & Curry, 2014).

Key Factors in Development of TEAMMATES

Although that study by Westerman et al. (2014) looked at comparing feedback differences between phone and texting, no study could be found that used text messaging as the primary mechanism to initiate a performance conversation. In preparing a supplemental tool to the annual performance review, the following considerations were made based on previous published guidance (Barnes-Farrell & Lynch, 2003):

1. What are the primary goals of the new system and how is this communicated to the users of the new system?

2. Is the design matched with those primary goals?

3. How can a new system avoid a conflict between providing valuable feedback (performance management) along with encouraging professional development?

Primary goals for TEAMMATES included improved conversations and documentation about performance between supervisors and employees. The conversations may be more frequent, lightweight, and meaningful interactions (Adobe, 2017). With unscheduled feedback through a familiar medium of text messaging, responses have the potential to be less curated,

be more casual in tone and voice, and better capture performance in the moment. The accuracy of performance tracking and sharing may also be superior to that of the annual performance review because text-message prompts will be more frequent snapshots in time, compared with the traditional performance review, which is a retelling of one's performance over the last 12 months in a single moment as part of the individual's self-evaluation.

Because real-time feedback mechanisms have been highlighted by several authors (Buckingham, 2013; Culbert, 2008; Goler et al., 2016; Longenecker & Fink, 2017), I developed a mobile device-based process that allowed for real-time information exchange, documentation, and archiving. To meet the objective of real-time feedback, the system could be used on any cell phone or device that can send or receive text messages. Termed TEAMMATES, the system utilized a commercially available technology and combined it with a novel approach to performance review.

Question Development and Timing

We know from Buckingham (2013) and early critics of the annual performance review and motivation experts that performance reviews should include constant dialogue between employer and employee, as well as recognition and demonstrated appreciation for accomplishments. But some managers fail to give recognition or criticism, and employees may be loath to self-promote so as not to seem bragging. Furthermore, others believe that managers increasingly must serve as coaches to their employees to influence behavior (Nelson, 2000), and this tool can support such an approach by identifying employee self-perception through self-evaluation feedback.

TEAMMATES attempts to address these concerns, first, by improving the frequency of conversations; second, by improving the quality of conversations by giving the employee agency into selecting questions to be asked; third, by focusing on strengths and successes and normalizing open discussion about performance; and fourth, by giving supervisors an opportunity to learn about and acknowledge successes that they previously may not have

known about. Three standard questions that elicited capture one type of response focused on self-disclosed positive feedback include

1. If you can, please give an example when you recently provided helpful guidance to a coworker or client? Describe what you did.

2. If you can, please give an example of a positive training, teaching, or learning moment between you and a coworker or client?

3. Please give a recent example of when a problem arose and you contributed to the solution? Describe what happened and your role.

Because TEAMMATES employed text messaging as the initial communication medium between supervisor and employee, both had to feel comfortable with the tone, style, and open-ended approach of the questions to ensure the employee responded reasonably and with sufficient specificity that the supervisor understood what was written. Furthermore, because positions in a unit can differ widely in scope and role, question sets for each staff person could have varied widely. The first two participants were provided the opportunity to develop their own questions independently; however, they struggled to come up with questions without assistance. It because more apparent that participants found it easier to be provided a standard set of questions, which could apply to a wide variety of workplace roles and situations. These questions can be found in Appendix 7. Although employee participants could develop questions for the supervisors to answer, separate and apart from the standard questions, none did.

When the employee and supervisor responded to the TEAMMATES question prompts, answers were designed to be shared with one another. The system selected three or four questions preselected from the agreed-upon full question set to ensure even distribution of the questions over the course of the experiment. Prompts were sent at approximately 5- to 10-week intervals and were otherwise unannounced. Once the employee responded to the questions, the supervisor had up to 1 week to respond to the questions from the system, which asked about their perception of the employee's performance using the same question set the employee

received. Once complete, the supervisor and employee received a notification that the answers had been collected by both parties and a light-touch report was generated (see Appendix 9 for examples), which led to the potential follow-up conversation. The light-touch concept comes from Adobe's Check-In Toolkit framework (2017), which among its priorities includes frequent two-way feedback.

Integrating Technology

SimpleTexting (SimpleTexting.com) is a software as a service typically used by businesses to engage customers via text messaging. Popularized by some hotel chains, in that setting, SimpleTexting can be programmed to automatically ask guests questions via text message after the checking in at the front desk. Anticipated responses such as "extra towels" can be preprogrammed to forward the request to the housekeeping department followed by an automatic text response of, "Of course, we will bring you more towels shortly. Do you need anything else?" SimpleTexting was programmed with questions and automatic responses with more questions, and also to forward unexpected responses to a human for personalized follow-up as needed. TEAMMATES utilized this technology and applied it in a novel manner for performance reviews. The questions, the appearance of informality, the familiarity of ubiquitous text messaging as a form of communication and documentation, and the unknown exact timing of questions to employee and supervisor comprise the "secret sauce" of TEAMMATES as a potential additional tool for, or alternative to, the annual performance review.

The questions were loaded into the SimpleTexting software through the SimpleTexting website. Text-message question sets were programmed to prompt responses from employee participants at 5- to 10-week intervals. An example of how question prompts from TEAMMATES appear on the participant's mobile device is shown in Figure 1.
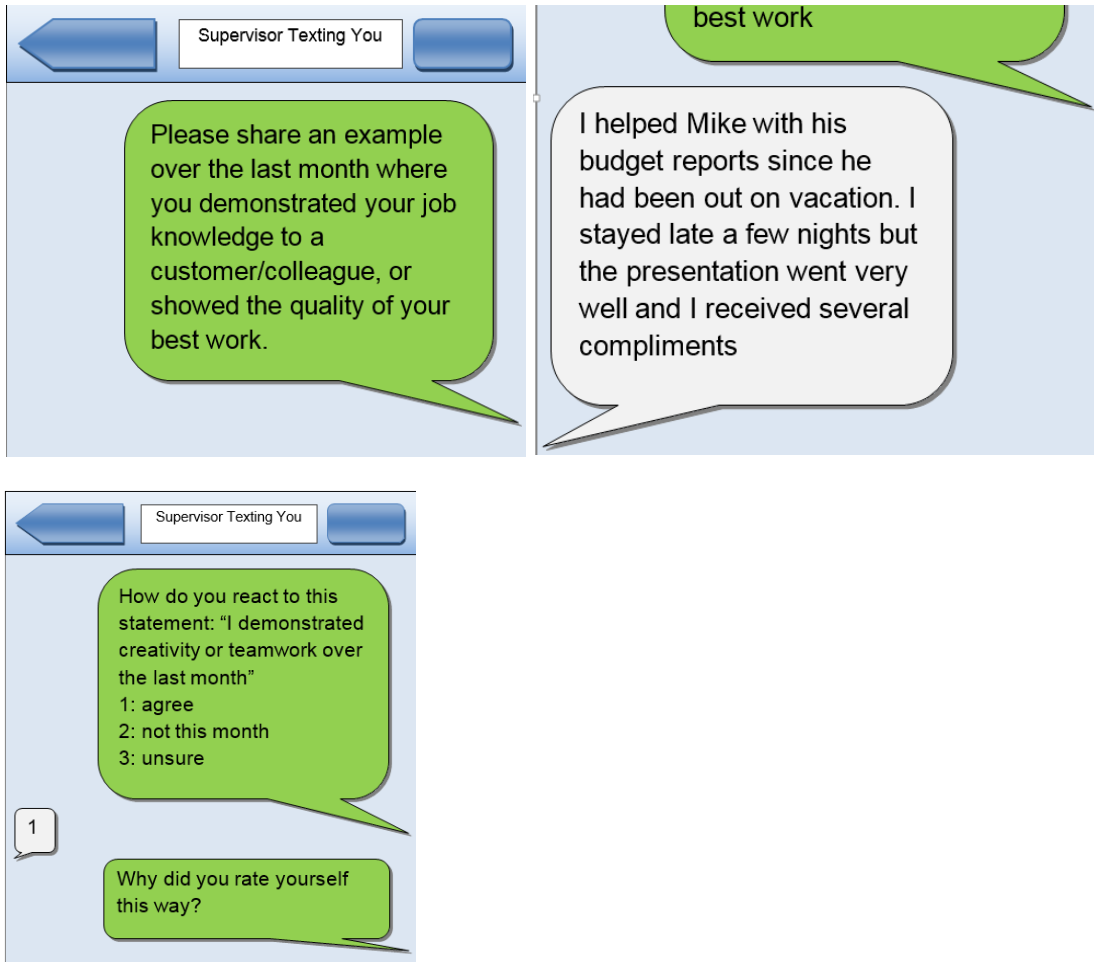
Figure 1. *Sample of TEAMMATES question prompts on mobile device.*

The last question of each text-message question prompt was the same and asked the employee participant, "Over the last month, how would you rate your own performance? 1=Exceeded goals, 2=Achieved most goals, 3=Missed a few goals." After employees responded with a number, they were asked to briefly explain why they rated themselves this way. After the employee and supervisors completed their respective sets of questions, employees could request a separate additional "conversation" via email, via additional texting, or in person.

Summary of How TEAMMATES Works

The questions between employee and supervisor, the text-message medium, and the intentional trigger that initiates the check-in were key features of TEAMMATES. The system was programmed to systematically prompt feedback conversations, or Check-Ins, for both

employees and supervisors. Furthermore, text-message responses received by TEAMMATES were logged and documented, allowing for straightforward historical reviews by the employee or the supervisor. This design feature of technology-driven question prompting was partly in response to the belief that supervisors would avoid real-time feedback they had to initiate—especially if the feedback is negative (Buckingham, 2013). As an alternative or a supplemental tool to the annual performance review, TEAMMATES was self-initiating and triggered the exchange avoided by supervisors and employees by initiating a set of questions that both parties consented to as part of the evaluation process and this experiment.

Evaluating *TEAMMATES* as a Tool

Although I initially intended to conduct a midpoint interview, it was determined that this would not be necessary and that a simple email asking whether participants were having any difficulties was sufficient. However, the study was interrupted and prolonged by the COVID-19 global pandemic, which shifted all study participants into a remote work setting and significantly altered the physical workplace.

After five sets of text-message question prompts, I conducted individual interviews by Zoom because in-person interviews were not possible with public health restrictions in place limiting face-to-face interactions. These interviews were designed to gauge user experience and usability. Interview questions are found in Appendix 7 and included questions similar to the following:

- Tell me what you thought about this experience?

- How would you describe the ease of use?

- How does this pilot compare to the typical performance review?

- Compared with your normal performance review process, how does this compare?

- Did you have more or fewer discussions about your performance compared with the typical performance review process?

- How would you describe your conversations or interactions with your supervisor?

- How was the quality of the feedback you received using TEAMMATES compared with the typical performance review?

- Did you learn anything new about yourself or your supervisor through this experience?

- What do you think could have improved the process?

My research questions asked what can be learned about the impact of a new performance appraisal system that uses supportive technology in a novel approach for staff at three selected higher education institutions. Furthermore, how can this learning be applied to designing a more effective performance appraisal system? Consequently, feedback interviews focused on exploring participant experiences of the perceived shortcomings of the conventional performance review as described in the academic literature, and comparing them to the TEAMMATES study and whether it was an improvement compared with the conventional performance review.

The questions asked about usability as well as perceived value and effectiveness. Questions comparing TEAMMATES to the conventional performance review were asked and participants were encouraged to think deeply about positive and negative reactions about the new system.

Study Limitations

There are some notable limitations of this study, including the possibility of selection bias based on how study participants were identified and invited to participate. Because most participants were contacted through a generic letter of invitation (see Appendix 6) through direct and indirect professional relationships to the researcher, study participants tended to be in research administration. Although this is a broad area encompassing compliance, regulatory, legal, and financial areas, nonetheless it is possible that these participants had an overly similar

perspective compared with nonresearch administrative potential study participants from, for example, the police department, housekeeping, or student affairs areas of higher education. This study was performed involving employees and supervisors at three different regions in an effort to diversify the study population.

In addition, it is also possible that those who found the study interesting enough to volunteer their time already had a predisposition to negative views of their current, conventional annual performance review. These employee participants may also have tended to be higher performing compared with colleagues, who might have less concern about receiving additional performance feedback even in an experimental setting. Although this alone would not invalidate study participant feedback, opinions, and impressions of TEAMMATES, it simply acknowledges that another form of selection bias could have occurred that is difficult to control for in this study.

Finally, it is important to recognize that a global pandemic struck in the middle of the experiment, which extended the anticipated study timeline from 6 to 12 months. All study participants experienced significant changes in their workplaces by moving to remote work as a result of public health safety requirements. Employees and supervisors both experienced stressors never before felt, and performance reviews took lower priority for organizations overall compared with simply maintaining basic normal business operations (Jaxon, 2021). "Just showing up to work" was an activity commonly praised response during study participant interviews: supervisors recognized employees during the pandemic because they just showed up to work and did not simply quit their positions to tend to other priorities, including caregiving or their own household needs stemming from serious health conditions (Weed, 2020).

Despite these limitations, this study provides important insights into how a novel approach at performance review using text messaging technology and light-touch approaches may support performance management in the future.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Summary

A total of 19 volunteers (11 employee participants and eight supervisors) participated in this study. Among the more notable findings were an overall positive reaction to the TEAMMATES system, which utilizes text messaging technology to prompt responses from users. The system also received numerous comments and suggestions for improvement. However, some criticisms and confusion arose about the ease of use and appropriateness of response. Some felt they could not fully express themselves via text, but others expressed a preference for it. Those who tended to have less work experience (less than 4 years) or were younger in age tended to have better impressions of using text messaging as a mode to communicate information about their performance. Conversely, those who tended to have more work experience and therefore were older or more familiar with the traditional annual performance review were more critical about text messaging, but for different and varied reasons. For example, supervisor participant Samuel, who described himself as near retirement, shared, "I'm an old fart and I've got fat fingers so texting isn't my favorite. I'll do it with my grandkids but I'd rather type [using a full keyboard]." There was a variety of feedback and impressions about TEAMMATES from these 19 participants, which will be further described in this chapter.

The Participants

A total of 28 research participants were enrolled and consented for this study. However, four employee research participants (n = 4) withdrew after informed consent was obtained, which also meant their supervisors to whom the employees reported to and would theoretically respond by text to them (n = 3) could not participate. Without employees participating, their supervisors would have no text responses to review or react to, and therefore the supervisor was withdrawn from the study. In addition, no participant enrolled fully completed every aspect

of the study (i.e., some did not respond to some text messages, some did not complete final interviews). Two research participants (n = 2) did not complete feedback interviews that would have captured the key data needed for analysis; therefore, data were collected from 19 participants: 11 employees and eight supervisors. See Appendix 10 for the table of participants and their pseudonyms.

Efforts were made to interview the four employees who withdrew from the study after initially agreeing to participate to attempt to determine whether features or aspects of the study themselves were factors for withdraw or nonparticipation. Two participants cited personal reasons for withdrawing, another participant indicated lack of available time due to other commitments, and the fourth prospective participant did not respond despite several attempts at contact.

Among the 19 who completed the study, 14 self-identified as female and five as male. They represented a wide range of years of work experience (2 to 39 years). A minimum of two years of work experience in their respective units was an inclusion criterion and assured some degree of participants' baseline familiarity with their local, conventional performance review processes. This resulted in 19 mini "case studies" of individuals sharing their impressions about the TEAMMATES system in relation to their past experiences and perceptions of performance review in their workplaces. These final reflections from participants provided important insights from which these results are presented.

There was consensus among the employee participants (10 of 12) that the text messaging, frequency, and light-touch questions were preferable when providing feedback about their performance to supervisors, compared with the annual performance review. However, their recommendations for how to improve the system varied based on personal preferences and experiences.

Positive Reaction to More Feedback Opportunities

Other frequent positive responses from participants were associated with the higher frequency of opportunities to give feedback in the light-touch check-ins prompted by text message and the convenience of not having to recall achievements or events from the distant past because of the memorializing nature of the comment-logging and recording system, compared with the annual performance review. Supervisor participant Steven speculated the process "could save so much time at the end of an annual review process….It feels much less burdensome to write 5 minutes of text messages about Gloria and her performance, rather than trying to think of a whole year's worth of performance issues." However, many research participants indicated that the text messaging *limited* their ability to express themselves in some ways and indicated a desire to be able to compose, revise, or review their text responses via a standard keyboard (i.e., on a desktop computer or laptop) and not their phones solely. For example, employee participant Laura remarked, "It's stressful to think of the finality of sending a text message without the tools like spell check, the mouse…the interaction of the mouse and editing can make it faster and easier. I'm a slow texter."

Casual Does Not Mean Better

Notable themes emerged that highlighted internal conflicts for participants. For example, the text medium was frequently referred to as "casual" or "informal," but users were accustomed to the annual performance review process as very formal, akin to creating one's "permanent record." As a result, some expressed concern that they were somehow not doing the right thing by using less formal language than they were used to or comfortable with in the text-message responses to TEAMMATES question prompts as a quasi-official employment and performance review process. This resulted in some participants expressing awkwardness and discomfort with the process. Employee participant Anne shared,

> I like to spend a lot of time thinking about my performance eval and like to write out my
> responses beforehand…I like to kind of take like a day to think about it and then go back

to everything. So with the text it felt a lot more informal. So I guess the pros of that was I didn't spend as long kind of like agonizing over everything, but also like, it felt like it was less important.

In this same vein, some participants would spend additional time and emotional energy to carefully respond to questions sent to them by text to get precisely the right words just as they would with the annual self-evaluation found in the conventional performance review. But the premise of TEAMMATES' original design centered on a system that uses casual text messaging to minimize the sense of anxiety and pressure commonly described in the literature by employees when completing the annual performance review. Some participants in this study described this sense of anxiety each time they received a text message even though the original intention was that these responses would have been casual. For example, employee participant Anne shared,

When I was asked a question and didn't have a good answer, I felt like I wasn't doing a good job and I felt stressed out. Sometimes there was nothing going on worth texting about and so I must not be doing something right.

Supervisors Struggled to Use the System

Another notable result was the low response rate by supervisors in this study, which also had indirect impact on the employees participating because supervisor responses were supposed to be shared contemporaneously with employees. The reasons for supervisors' low adherence to the study protocol (i.e., failing to respond to the text-message prompts and questions) varied. Supervisors responded to text-message prompts less than 11.7% of the time (seven out of 60 total opportunities to respond).

Overall, the study participants felt TEAMMATES could be a useful tool to support and enhance workplace performance management with more perceived effectiveness than the annual performance review, but improvements to the system were identified and additional feedback, user testing, and study is recommended. Supervisor participant Steven stated, "It feels much less burdensome to write 5 minutes of text messages about her performance, rather than trying to think of a whole year's worth of performance issues [all at once during the annual

performance review." For employees, the frequent check-ins and responding to the

TEAMMATES question prompts helped him improve his perspective on his work as it

happened: "I did feel kind of good about it. It gave me an opportunity to take stock of the things

that I actually had done, which kind of helped to center me with where I was with certain

projects." This finding that TEAMMATES could be a useful tool with more perceived

effectiveness is significant and will be discussed later in this chapter. Ten (of 12) of the

employee participants indicated that TEAMMATES would be a useful tool with suggested

improvements, and two participants were unsure and wanted to test the next version first before

making a definitive statement about TEAMMATES 2.0.

Emerging Themes: Frequent Check-Ins, Positive Responses

Frequent check-ins were perceived as more effective than the annual performance

review because of the intervals of ongoing performance feedback and sharing. This was a

widely repeated theme expressed by participants, and a strength of the TEAMMATES system,

and there were opportunities for improvement. Multiple check-ins about performance throughout

the year are preferred to the annual performance review, in part, because they *reduce the*

amount of recall burden. Study participant Karen commented, "It doesn't seem like I have to

recall as much. I'm just recalling a shorter span of time, which is a lot easier in terms of memory

load." Laura added,

> I think it's a much better picture of the year. I mean, I think it's more frequent sampling
> versus just single sampling certainly makes a lot of sense for any kind of collection [over
> the year]. But I also think it got me thinking about those questions more than once a
> year. That's a good thing.

This is perhaps an expected result because the published literature on performance reviews

cited recency bias—the tendency to recall only those most recent work accomplishments or

shortcomings and not those from 10 or 11 months ago—as a deficiency of the annual

performance review. Asking questions about employee and office performance throughout the

year, and effectively allowing TEAMMATES to serve as a *contemporaneous recording tool* for

employees, was intentionally designed and study participants responded positively to this feature.

Text Messages Had Pros and Cons

However, the text messaging as a medium received mixed reactions and comments from study participants. Although the majority of employees found the text messaging question prompts for feedback helpful, some employees disliked texting and expressed a preference for a full-sized keyboard, a word processing program, or a website to respond to questions. Some had *physiological challenges* with texting, such as employee participant James, who clarified:

> I have rather kind of larger thumbs. And so when I'm trying to type things out on a text, I can make a lot of errors. I even have a bigger phone, it doesn't help at all. So, um, I guess one of the reasons why I shy away from text messages generally speaking, it's like, it's just harder for me to articulate myself. That's kind of frustrating to have to go back and make a lot of corrections to something that I'm trying to say.

The Desirable Standard Keyboard and Mouse

A majority of employee participants (10 of 12) specifically stated a preference for a desktop computer (with a full-sized keyboard) or laptop to initially respond, review, edit, or finalize their responses. Every participant who indicated a *preference for a keyboard* also commented that their responses could then be collected via a website and fillable form, standalone TEAMMATES app on a mobile device, or word processing document for responding. James expressed texting was "just harder" for him to articulate his thoughts, and employee participant Tammy indicated:

> Ultimately if I'm writing it, then I want the control over the formatting and content. I mean, I think, I think there's a lot of really important stuff that may not have been captured otherwise, but I guess I want the ability to go back and say, wait, does that really capture what I want it to capture?

Tammy's comment revealed a noteworthy and unexpected reaction to TEAMMATES. Although the intention behind the text-messaging medium and the tone and nature of the question prompts were expected to promote casual, unscripted responses, some users wanted

to curate their responses as they would for the annual performance review self-evaluation.

Another employee participant, Karen, expressed it this way:

> I wouldn't say that I'm very particular, but I want to make sure that I'm not having any typos or anything. So like, not only am I just kind of like making sure my thoughts are kind of coherent, but that it, it looks grammatically correct. And I do have a tendency of kind of move too quickly. So I want to take a step back and make sure that it's the way I want to present myself. So that's the way that I kind of would agonize. It's like making sure that everything is, you know, coherent, but also doesn't look like it was typed by like a middle schooler.

Users may not have fully understood or been able to adapt to the implied casual nature of texting with their traditional notions of formal performance review, which historically requires a more curated self-evaluation that can be composed, reviewed, and revised over days or weeks. This seeming contradiction for some users manifested itself in several ways, but the most prominent was the desire for a keyboard so that one's thoughts could be more comfortably organized and typed into the system. Therefore, not only did some participants literally struggle with their fingers and thumbs using TEAMMATES, but several participants expressed a form of internal conflict in trying to reconcile the casualness and informality of TEAMMATES' questions and texting medium with the formality of what participants conceptualize and traditionally understand as annual performance review. Employee participant Anne described it this way:

> With the text message, it was half good half bad because I wouldn't spend so much time kind of thinking about like, "Am I putting myself in the best light?" And then that would stress me out. I miss things when I'm texting people in general. I was worried it was coming out kind of garbled in terms of like the actual texts that people were reading….For me, texts as a millennial, it's sort of the primary way that I communicate with my friends and a lot of my family. It is sort of my like nonformal way of communicating versus me using Teams or email, which is more formal.

Some users, like Anne, found texting convenient but at the expense of a familiar curated self-evaluation experience such as they would find in the annual performance review.

Casual Texts May Be Something Special

Conversely, employee participant Kelly remarked that texting

> allows somebody to think about things in a more casual environment. Maybe it brings down a few more barriers because it's a little more personable. So it allows somebody to

70

maybe have a level of honesty of impromptu-ness that they wouldn't necessarily have in a formal setting.

When asked whether she wanted the *option* of a full keyboard, in contrast to other participants, Kelly recommended against it:

> No…I think that what makes [TEAMMATES] super accessible is the idea that it's texted…. What makes it so simple as I can actually remember walking from my office building to my car to just use that time to think where you're not being distracted. You're walking and moving and thinking and you're able to respond right there [on your phone in text].

Negative reactions to certain questions

Meanwhile, employee participant Tammy expressed feelings of letdown when she was not able to respond to a question with a sufficiently strong answer that would reflect her good work. Three example standard question prompts used in TEAMMATES included:

1. If you can, please give an example when you recently provided helpful guidance to a coworker or client? Describe what you did.

2. If you can, please give an example of a positive training, teaching, or learning moment between you and a coworker or client?

3. Please give a recent example of when a problem arose and you contributed to the solution? Describe what happened and your role.

When Tammy could not think of a strong or "good enough" response to a text message prompt, or chose to skip the question, she feared she would now be mistakenly perceived by her supervisor negatively for skipping one of these questions. Her mood was negatively impacted since before receiving the TEAMMATES question prompts, she reported generally feeling good about her job performance, but when faced with a question like (1), (2), or (3) above, and she could not think of a concrete example, Tammy worried that skipping the response reflected poor work performance. Moreover, she used harsh and overly critical words to describe herself, including "loser," "underperforming," and "failure," for skipping questions. Certainly this was not the intention of TEAMMATES, and she was the only one among 12

employee participants to describe her experience this way, but her comments were nonetheless powerful and important testimony. This points to the likely need for *more education and training on how TEAMMATES is different* from the annual performance review at the introduction of TEAMMATES to users. (This will be discussed more in Chapter 5). Specifically, this training will need to include how the informal texts will be used and how this process is different from the annual performance review.

This study asked participants not only to change their regular behavior by asking them to respond to text question prompts, but also to change the way they *think* about sharing performance feedback (from August 2019 to December 2020), which should have been made more explicit during the TEAMMATES orientation steps.

Missing and Forgetting to Text Respond

Another theme involved a trend of *inconsistent response or nonresponse to the text prompts*. Employee participants also shared their most common reasons for not responding to question prompts from the TEAMMATES system:

- the text came from an unfamiliar number, appeared to be SPAM, phishing, or a scam, so it was ignored;
- participant had no recall of ever seeing the text whatsoever;
- participant had forgotten they were participating in this study; or
- participant initially saw the text, set it aside with the intention of responding later, and forgot to return to it.

Mitigation strategies and recommendations will be made in the next chapter to address these issues.

Supervisors Especially Struggled to Respond to Texts

All participating supervisors (n = 7) failed to respond to at least one question prompt, and two supervisors failed to respond to any question prompts. Supervisors offered varying reasons

to justify low adherence: dislike of texting, not having time, not recognizing the text sender was the TEAMMATES project, and forgetting to respond to the text prompts were the most common responses. All seven supervisors expressed a preference for a nontexting medium as one of the main reasons they did not fully respond to the TEAMMATES text question-prompts. There were other reasons as well, which will be described shortly. Study participant supervisor Seth shared, "I'm kind of text avoidant in general…Because I'm old, I don't like handheld devices in terms of you know, typing things out with my thumbs and I prefer a browser environment in general." Similarly, supervisor Steven found a creative solution to this problem of texting when he preferred to type. Because he used a smart phone that automatically sends his text messages to his laptop and desktop, and he was able to respond to texts from his computer that returned text messages to his phone,

> I realized that I could use my laptop. It would be a lot easier if I could get an email and a text to remind me that you got to do it. The email can link to the response and you can do it in 5 minutes and not fumble with the texting on my small phone screen.

These comments reflected the general emerging theme, that it may be important to *provide additional options to texting to collect performance feedback* that are flexible enough for the individual's preferred medium, whether that be text message, online form, email, or a website.

All employee participants were asked whether in-person engagement while participating in the study changed compared with the previous year (when the annual performance review alone was administered). All 12 employees participating in the study indicated *TEAMMATES did not appear to impact real-life, in-person engagement* between employees and supervisors However, several potential confounding effects, including a global pandemic, altered workplace operations at each study site and also could have impacted in-person engagement. I shall discuss these potential unexpected and confounding effects in Chapter 5.

Some employee participants felt that supervisors who failed to respond to the TEAMMATES question prompts were too busy, not in the same location as their direct reports, or did not closely monitor their employees' work. Furthermore, in an increasingly hybrid work

environment, employee participants suggested TEAMMATES could positively impact employee engagement because it can be an asynchronous tool to provide performance feedback. Study participants were asked whether their in-person interactions with their supervisors discussing performance changed by participating in the study, and only two employee participants could cite specific incidents that could be associated with participating in the study. One of those real-life discussions about TEAMMATES outside of the system involved Gloria asking her supervisor Steven about the study and the study logistics. Gloria recalled only asking Steven whether he received a "set of questions to answer" from the TEAMMATES system, and Steven giving her a "blank, worried stare." TEAMMATES did not appear to have a strong association with perceived improvement with employee-supervisor engagement.

Supervisor Observations

All seven supervisor participants failed to respond to at least one TEAMMATES question prompt when it was their turn to provide feedback for their employees. Overall supervisor participant response rate was lower than expected at 11.7% (seven out of 60 total opportunities to respond). However, employee participants generally did not have negative reactions to this nonparticipation by their supervisors. Most employee participants stated they thought their supervisors were probably "too busy," but one participant, Anya, commented,

> I think if my supervisor responded or even just acknowledged reading what I was submitting, it wouldn't have felt so one-sided and I might have been more into it. Instead I was just answering questions and not hearing back so I don't know if she didn't read it, didn't agree with me, or what.

This will be an important shortcoming of the system to address in the next iteration of TEAMMATES and will be discussed in Chapter 5. Even when supervisors did not respond to their question prompts, employee participants commented that they found their own texts and words helpful in jogging their memories and TEAMMATES made it easier to recall the facts and happenings in the past, including their emotional states, current stressors at the time, etc. Although engagement between the employee and supervisor did not seem strongly expressed

during feedback sessions with study participants, overall employee engagement seemed

elevated simply through use of TEAMMATES itself and employee participants reviewing their

own responses collected over a period of time. This asynchronous not-in-person "engagement"

could be illustrated by Laura, who revealed:

> [TEAMMATES] got me thinking about sharing things that maybe I wouldn't
> have….Formally, we just did [performance review] once a year and Sabune [supervisor]
> makes annual performance review a pretty quick process…. [Being in this study] has
> kind of got me thinking about sharing things that maybe I wouldn't have shared with
> Sabune in the past. So, it was like, Oh, that's a good thing. I should share that with
> Sabune before performance review time. [laughter]"

This example of self-reflection and deeper consideration about one's performance and

how it is shared with others strikes me as an important form of engagement, but not what I had

originally considered.

Texting Is Not Enough: TEAMMATES, the App

Several respondents described past behavior of recording in a separate Word document

or calendar their achievements throughout the year so they could remember them and

expressed a desire for a TEAMMATES app or web-based application that could perform a

similar recording function with more employee-centric controls and features. Essentially, some

participants indicated texting was too simple and clunky, and participants wanted a more

sophisticated system that would be a tool for users that supported the light-touch and frequent

check-ins in the form of a more advanced technology than texting alone.

With encouragement and prompting of feedback throughout the theoretical 12-month

annual performance review period, employee participants indicated that they felt they could

acknowledge both smaller accomplishments and errors, knowing that there would be other

opportunities to add future positive experiences and comments. Furthermore, respondents

commented that the single, once-per-year performance feedback typical of the annual

performance review undesirably elevated the stakes and pressures of both positive and

negative self-disclosures. Some respondents claimed they would add token self-critical

observations in order to give the impression of a balanced self-assessment. In contrast, employee participants stated that TEAMMATES gave them a certain amount of peace of mind that any small negative observation would be only a moment in time and other performance check-ins during the year would provide a more accurate reflection of performance.

Furthermore, employee and supervisor participants alike expressed a desire for a web- or form-based application, which would allow text editing. Anne captured this sentiment this way:

> I'd want to be able to do some editing on it. I'd want to like frame it or put a thesis statement or something. I want to see it again. I really want to think about that again. I don't know that [single comment] entirely summarizes the year. I don't know that that gets at what I've done during the year. I mean, everything that I've done is important…I hate to say touchy, feely, but some [texts I wrote are] inner office interaction kind of stuff, which I think is important. It's very important. But I guess in terms of like, I did this, I did this, I did this and maybe that's not necessary in a performance appraisal, but I'm so used to having to put that in. I'm not sure that that gets captured in a way that makes me comfortable.

A desktop-based application or form could also include features described previously such as editing, spell-check, and linking to work email. But study participants also mentioned the following potential benefits of a TEAMMATES web-based app and possible enhancements:

- allow for linking responses initially composed by text to be later edited using a full screen and standard sized keyboard;

- add a reminder flag for follow-up via email or this application;

- provide an acknowledgement button for supervisors rather than requires actual written responses;

- possible customization for users so that if texting alone is sufficient, no further review or editing is needed; and

- an additional customization feature for employee users to mark certain responses as private or "journal entry only" so the supervisor may not see those; instead, those

comments would be for employees to use as they see fit, or not at all, as the case

may be.

Personalize TEAMMATES Features to User Preference as Much as Possible

Taken together, personalizing TEAMMATES such that one may use text only or a

combination of texting and keyboard responses, linking text-message prompts to email or not,

and adding reminders were among the features that some study participants desired but others

thought were unnecessary. We shall explore these options, and the notion of personalized,

individualized options for TEAMMATES as an underlying feature while still including technology

and light- touch check-ins as a foundational component to the system, in Chapter 5.

Overall, responses about TEAMMATES were generally positive, but several possible

modifications to the system were mentioned by multiple participants, which suggests that if

improvements are adopted, TEAMMATES would become a stronger potential performance

management tool compared with the version of TEAMMATES presented in this experiment. In

addition, nearly every participant who used the system indicated they would like TEAMMATES,

with some modifications, to be offered as a potential future option for their current performance

evaluation process.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This study sought to address two research questions:

1. What can be learned about the impact of a new performance appraisal system that uses supportive technology in a novel approach for staff at three selected higher education institutions?

2. How can this learning be applied to designing a more effective performance appraisal system?

In this chapter, I shall discuss the major insights learned from 19 study participants, including 12 employees and seven supervisors, about their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences after using TEAMMATES. The approach uses text messaging as a prompter for light check-in feedback from employees and supervisors. In addition, I will discuss how study participant feedback can shape future improvements and enhancements to TEAMMATES and explain why such recommendations are warranted. Furthermore, attention will be given to occasionally articulated ideas and themes that may point to other important areas for additional study despite the low frequency of the theme. Finally, limitations of the study will be discussed, as well as how TEAMMATES has the potential to serve as an alternative to the annual performance review, or as a complementary tool to make the annual performance review process easier and less burdensome for employee and supervisor alike.

What Has Been Learned: Major Insights From 19 Participants

Study participants shared numerous insights from their experiences using the TEAMMATES system. Many suggestions were practical, mechanical improvements, such as offering a keyboard typing option. Other participants shared more intimate and emotional reactions—both positive and negative—to the system, suggesting modifications to the TEAMMATES system itself or improved instructions to better set expectations and to prevent undesirably strong negative emotional reactions as a result of participating.

Strengths of the TEAMMATES System

Study participants shared several common positive themes about the TEAMMATES system including praise for the underlying premise of the system itself, which centered on l*ight-touch check-ins* and asked casual questions every 4 to 8 weeks about employee and team performance. This contrasts with the self-evaluation section annual performance review, which carries a high burden of effort by asking employees and supervisors in one encompassing question and response to recall their performances unaided from the prior 12 months. Participants in this study echoed those described in the published literature as emotionally difficult, stressful, and anxiety provoking. By comparison, the light touch check-ins were linked to casual question answering via text message. In addition, reactions to *text messaging as a prompter* to obtain initial responses were favorable overall, although a full keyboard option was recommended for a future version of TEAMMATES. The benefits of light-touch check-ins recognized and articulated by study participants were perhaps not surprising given the more recent and growing popularity of this model for performance management (Adobe, 2017). This practice of light-touch check-ins has made been prominent through practice by Adobe, Inc., which has made available a toolkit under open-source copyright. TEAMMATES study respondents shared similar positive impressions as those described in the literature for light-touch, frequent check-ins. These impressions included less anxiety and stress to provide more frequent casual feedback compared with the annual performance review, as well as minimizing recency bias in performance review. Recency bias typically occurs when a manager or employee overweighs or only recalls the most recent or major events instead of evenly considering and weighing all events that happened earlier in the year, as the annual performance review covers a 12-month period. With recency bias, events in the early months are minimized or even completely forgotten compared with events that happened in months 11 and 12, for example.

Seamless Documentation, Unexpected Nonresponses

Because the system records responses via text message, documentation is automatic and straightforward and, by design, provided to employee participants in the form of light-touch check-in reports that are emailed to participants. Once in the report form, the content can be easily transferred to the official annual performance review, or serve in and of itself as a potentially acceptable alternate to the annual performance review as a rolling performance review if an organization chooses this option. Notably, many supervisor respondents did not respond to the TEAMMATES text prompts, and as a result, individual feedback was not shared with the employee respondent until the end of the study, just prior to the final study interview, all at once. Consequently, many employee participants did not review their responses until months after they initially responded in TEAMMATES. Although this was not planned, in some ways it better mimicked a real-life scenario had this exercise taken place outside of a study environment. Some employees had forgotten their initial responses, allowing them to recall individual contexts associated with their responses and most considered this part of the expected study.

Addressing Nonresponses

It was not expected that every participant would respond to all TEAMMATES text-message prompts. Furthermore, this study revealed that that design features of TEAMMATES potentially contributed to nonresponses; namely, some users simply did not like text messaging as a medium by which to communicate, whereas others found text messaging desirable or had neutral feelings towards text messaging. Moreover, no participants objected to adding to TEAMMATES the option of responding using a full keyboard through email or text link to a web-based form or application.

Supervisor participants did not respond to TEAMMATES text-message prompts as often as employee respondents. Additional consideration and research may be needed to support supervisor participation in actual use case environments, perhaps through financial incentives or

assurances that time invested in the TEAMMATES system will reduce the amount of

performance review work in the future overall. One supervisor commented that she simply did

not have the time to respond to the text-message prompts despite their short lengths, and would

not be able to respond to TEAMMATES for every direct report if the system were implemented

for her entire team in a real-life setting. The number of texts would be impractical, she indicated.

As a result, it may worth changing this feature in TEAMMATES of *requiring* supervisor

feedback, despite another supervisor indicating that he felt it was an important aspect of

TEAMMATES that the supervisor participate actively and frequently. As a pilot study, additional

focus on supervisor role in, burden of, and utilization of TEAMMATES may be warranted.

Because TEAMMATES was *in addition* to their normal annual evaluation processes, this also

could have negatively impacted supervisor participation. For instance, if supervisors are already

too busy with their work-required performance reviews, they may be less motivated to provide

double feedback by participating in this study. Perhaps if TEAMMATES replaced or was more

integrated with other parts of the employee evaluation and feedback system, it might have been

used more.

Saving time is likely a strong motivator to ensure supervisor participation in

TEAMMATES 2.0. To achieve time savings, the updated system should be easier to use by

including some or all of the improvements recommended, and ideally should include assurances

that TEAMMATES will replace annual performance review, or alternatively, autofill or populate

the annual performance in appropriate sections so supervisor feedback during the year through

TEAMMATES reduces the total time to complete the annual performance review.

TEAMMATES Enhancement: Text +

Nearly every employee study participant asked that a response option be offered in the

next version of TEAMMATES, in addition to texting. Although the TEAMMATES system was

originally conceived of and intentionally implemented as a text-only system, most study

participants felt this was too limiting for users, and restricting responses to text messaging may

unintentionally lead to low adherence and lower quality responses from employees and supervisors alike. The text-only option was thought to have some benefits that this study could validate:

1. Some employees do not have consistent access to a desktop or laptop computer, such as those in housekeeping or facilities management personnel, and TEAMMATES would be a system usable by all employees.

2. The light-touch check-ins were another key feature of TEAMMATES that was thought to complement the style and familiarity of texting, which is inherently casual in nature, and therefore would increase the likelihood of responses.

3. Texting has become a common communication method, such that younger, less experienced workers, as well as older, more experienced smartphone users, have become accustomed and comfortable with texting today.

However, what emerged from interviews and discussions with study participants was a commonly expressed resistance to texting for these purposes. *Text+* is a feature enhancement to TEAMMATES in response to the struggles articulated by study participants and allows for a full keyboard option by providing a web-based application interface and not just a text-message-only option alone. A full keyboard addresses some of the major concerns about TEAMMATES 1.0, and recommendations from participants. Specifically, a full keyboard

- allows for users to provide initial responses to TEAMMATES in lieu of texting, as applicable;

- provides an option to more easily edit responses, and organize thoughts of structures of responses compared with texting on the user's mobile device; and

- allows for deeper thought and more self-reflection, potentially, depending on the individual and desired approach to responding.

The Text+ web-based application includes features and a familiar word-processor-like form to compose, edit, and spell and grammar check.

TEAMMATES Enhancement: +Email Option

In addition, the web-based form or application could have additional features that allow for an email to be sent to the user's email account of choice, and not text-message prompts to their mobile devices alone. The complementary email feature was requested as a way for there to be a task-based follow-up flag reminder option, similar to how employees manage and track other work assignments. Because completing TEAMMATES responses was perceived as a work task, some employee respondents wanted to be able to track this task in their email or work calendars. By receiving text messages and reminders only on personal smartphones, employees might lose or forget the task of responding to TEAMMATES among other responsibilities that would otherwise be tracked in their work emails or calendars.

TEAMMATES Enhancement: +Personalization of Features and Settings

Personalization of TEAMMATES 1.0 settings takes several forms. In the experimental version of TEAMMATES, the only personalization was the selection of questions, which occurred at the beginning of the study during the orientation and project setup. Employee and supervisor participants reviewed the recommended question prompts and could make changes to those questions. After they agreed, those questions would not change and were loaded into the TEAMMATES system. Only from those questions were prompts selected, usually three or four question items per cycle.

The proposed TEAMMATES enhancement of additional personalization of features and settings includes

- Giving the users a *choice on frequency of questions.* In this study, the researcher determined the frequency with which a text-message prompt was sent to users. By giving employees and supervisors the choice to set monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly

check-ins, TEAMMATES 2.0 would recognize the individual preferences of users as they relate to frequency and burden of providing performance feedback in the system. Some users shared that they wanted to increase feedback frequency because it would provide more snapshots in time over the course of the year, and therefore more opportunities to see more detailed performance logged and archived. Conversely, some users thought more check-ins were too burdensome and these participants suggested too many check-ins would not provide any more insights and would simply waste time by providing redundant answers to questions. To accommodate for individual supervisor-employee preferences, frequency of questions could be personalized in TEAMMATES 2.0, allowing users set the frequency with which question prompts are sent to an individual.

- Provide the option for users to label and categorize respondent comments as private, and not shared with the supervisor. Some employee participants expressed concern that their responses, particularly when provided via text message, were too raw or personal for a professional exercise like a performance review and TEAMMATES. However, users also liked the idea of having the comment as a reference point for their eyes only, and as *private notes for the employee as recall reminders.* This effectively expands TEAMMATES into also a personal performance note-taking and tracking tool, mimicking a practice that many employee participants shared to individually track their accomplishments in a separate file for themselves over the course of the year. Typically this was done in a separate personal document on the employees' desktops. No longer would this extra, separate document be needed if there were the ability in TEAMMATES to keep personal private notes, either texted or composed in the web-based form, in a protected section of the tool firewalled from supervisor view. Meanwhile, all other comments could be shared with supervisors unless the comment was specifically marked private by the user.

- Ability to *add new questions* at any time for inclusion into the text messaging question prompt rotations. Some supervisors and employees indicated they wanted the option to add questions after the initial setup of the system.

- Add a simple, *easy button* to trigger an in-person face-to-face engagement. Some users shared that occasionally a text-message question prompt inspired a much longer response or concern that was not easily articulated or shared in writing, regardless of whether that was in text-message form or through a keyboard-written response. Sometimes the reaction to the TEAMMATES question was unexpectedly emotional, politically sensitive, or complex. Other times, the employee participant wanted to share the situation, but simply didn't want to type it out for the purposes of the exercise. The reasons varied, but TEAMMATES can better serve its users if it accommodates a wide variety of situations and personal communication preferences for both the employee and supervisor.

- Providing the option of *text only* for those users who intentionally do not want the full keyboard option available to them. In other words, give maintain the original design of TEAMMATES 1.0 with only text only responses (and therefore opt out of an alternate full keyboard option) in a future version, TEAMMATES 2.0. This will be explained further in another section, "Notable (but Not Frequent) Mentions."

TEAMMATES Enhancement: +Supervisor Features

Participation by supervisors was unexpectedly low in this study. However, some themes emerged, including providing supervisors the option of simple preworded acknowledgments, or a switch or visual "has been read" symbol to employees that would indicate that supervisors had read employees' responses with a simple acknowledgement or symbol indicator that the response had been read. Another option for supervisors was a simple button in the web-based app for a request for additional information, or for further discussion that would be in person.

These recommendations are centered on providing supervisors more and easier ways to acknowledge the participation of their staff without adding significant time resources to support the TEAMMATES process. Some supervisors may have 10 or more direct reports, and saving supervisors time will be an important incentive to support adoption. If supervisors have some assurance, for example, that 5 minutes responding to the TEAMMATES question prompts will save them more time in the future, this would likely support a successful transition.

For the University of California, TEAMMATES 2.0 could be adopted as a tool that feeds and autofills the current annual performance review. More innovative supervisors could adopt the entire system fully so long as they have unrepresented staff. Union represented staff must use the union-approved standard performance evaluation forms; however, unrepresented staff have much wider latitude as to the form content. In all cases, however, the scoring nomenclature must remain consistent (e.g., solid performance, above expectations, exceeds expectations).

On a University of California systemwide level, HR leader engagement would be required, ideally nominated by the local HR campus directors who express interest. It is not an easy path, to be sure, but also not insurmountable.

Not all study participants wanted a full keyboard option

The two employee participants who took explicit positions against the full keyboard expressed a similar desire to keep the feedback casual. They both indicated that by shifting to a full keyboard and therefore a web-based form or application away from their handheld mobile devices fundamentally—and potentially negatively—changed the interaction from a light-touch check-in into something more formal, mimicking the annual performance review. Specifically, employee study participant Karen speculated that a full keyboard would have made the TEAMMATES more anxiety provoking, like the formal self-evaluation section of the annual performance review, which she dreaded. Furthermore, employee participant Kelly highlighted that she enjoyed the ease of using her smartphone and texting to respond while she walked

from the office to her car after work, because that is a time of decompression and self-reflection, which is a unique and special moment in time, different from sitting in front of one's desktop monitor and full keyboard to artfully and carefully craft a response. Kelly also felt the text messaging promoted "a level of honesty of impromptu-ness" that could be lost in a more formal medium such as typing responses on a full keyboard. The contrarian and minority opinions expressed in the study by these two study participants about the value of text messaging or differences between text messaging and keyboard responses in the context of performance review have not been examined in the published literature. This study is the first known to consider feedback differences obtained via text messaging compared with full keyboard narrative responses commonly used in annual performance reviews, which may be worthy of additional study.

Unknown Impact of Supervisor Feedback

TEAMMATES was initially designed as a contemporaneous feedback tool whereby the employee and supervisor complete the question prompts via text message at essentially the same time and are then able to see how each of them respond in real time. If there were differences between supervisor and employee, theoretically the differences would become readily apparent to the employee and supervisor when one another's comments were provided to each other in real time, and could be discussed at that moment. However, an unexpected trend of this study was supervisor nonresponsiveness. The reasons supervisors provided for not responding to the text-message prompts from the TEAMMATES system varied, but for many employee participants there were no supervisor feedback to review.

There may be a general cultural norm that giving frequent feedback and coaching is not a respected function of a manager/leader. There are no apparent incentives, special recognition, or even expectations that frequent feedback is desired in the typical workplace. With limited time in the day, employees and supervisors tend not to prioritize feedback sessions,

which points to the potential value of TEAMMATES, as it appears to be a tool that can facilitate these frequent feedback and coaching sessions.

Most employee participants indicated that supervisor failure to respond did not concern employees, as they had forgotten contemporaneous feedback from the supervisor was not part of TEAMMATES' study design. Although other employee participants confessed that not hearing from their supervisors led them to feel less motivated to participate and consequently develop negative feelings toward TEAMMATES, and that the exercise felt one-sided because their supervisors did not participate.

Because of the unexpected low participation levels of supervisors, it is not clear how significant supervisor participation is to TEAMMATES overall. Specifically, there remain unanswered questions that may warrant further study, including

- What is the ideal role and participation or contribution of supervisors in TEAMMATES?

- How important is supervisor participation?

- Can supervisor participation be optional based on employee or supervisor preference?

- Should supervisors be required to participate, and if so, how to mandate this?

These issues may be worthy of future research to better understand why supervisors are hesitant to provide frequent feedback when using TEAMMATES. Although this was done in a voluntary and experimental setting, it is possible that a mandate from supervisors' superiors to use TEAMMATES would simply result in adoption, and that in any experimental setting, gift card incentives of any denomination may not be enough for a supervisor to willfully participate in a second performance review process voluntarily, even a process designed to help supervisors in the future.

Once an eventual decision about the timing and necessity of real-time feedback from supervisors in TEAMMATES is made, a customization option may be put in place for employees to indicate whether they prefer supervisor feedback for every response or do not expect it. This could make TEAMMATES 2.0 more personalized and could recognize that not all employees feel the same about the necessity of feedback from supervisors. However, it is still undetermined how important supervisor feedback is in relation to the overall success of TEAMMATES as a potential new evaluation tool.

TEAMMATES Enhancement: +Training, Education

Study participant feedback indicated that TEAMMATES required users to shift their ways of thinking about and responding to a new performance evaluation tool. Study participants were asked not only to change how they provided information about performance of themselves through a text messaging medium, but also to switch to a more casual approach, as reflected through the casual wording and tone of questions and higher frequency of prompting for feedback. Some study participants struggled with this change, and perhaps it was too different for participants to internalize and adapt to in too short a period of time. To address this, perhaps more training is recommended prior to a future implementation of TEAMMATES 2.0 so that users understand how TEAMMATES fits into a new performance appraisal paradigm: not only are casual responses acceptable, casual responses are desirable and preferred. Admittedly, this was not emphasized in the instructions for this study, nor would that instruction have been appropriate, as if could have influenced users and their approach to TEAMMATES. One of the key insights of this study involves this internal tension that demonstrates the conflict users feel about shifting to frequent casual feedback when the process they are most familiar with is formal and once a year. One of the goals of the study was to explore how TEAMMATES might be a part of performance management to a wider audience of users. The study could have created another cohort of users that was given more explicit direction about the acceptability of—and the strong preference for—casual responses, which is very different from what they are

used to in the annual performance review. An explicit direction and explanation of context for casual feedback, including frequent specific statements about text messaging and the light-touch aspects, could have reduced the feelings of anxiety and frustration expressed by some study participants when they were unsure whether they were answering a question "correctly." To be clear, there were no incorrect responses, but when employee participants could not think of a response to a question, some indicated that they felt inadequate or they were somehow not performing well. With an additional cohort who were encouraged to provide casual responses, differences could be gauged compared with the others who were not given this explicit instruction.

A future iteration of TEAMMATES would include a more robust training and ramp-up orientation program that emphasizes the following:

- Not being able to answer a question, or skipping a question, is not a negative reflection of you, your coworkers, or your supervisors. Some questions will not apply to you at that moment in time because questions are neutrally preselected by the system and random, and therefore without context.

- The goal of the system is to elicit as close to immediate responses from you as possible without careful curation. Although text messaging is an option, you can also choose to have the TEAMMATES system email you or link the text message to the TEAMMATES web form or application.

- Responses in TEAMMATES can be marked as private, for employee use only, or to be shared with supervisor as opt in. There will be a setting that can be changed for each individual response, but the default is private. Users can change the default setting based on personal preference and choose to have individual responses shared with supervisors on a question-by-question basis.

TEAMMATES 2.0

This study sought to learn about the impact of a new performance appraisal system that utilized text messaging technology in a novel approach at three selected higher education institutions. In addition, the study aimed to learn how this novel system could be better designed so that it is more effective.

There were positive features identified by 19 study participants, as well as areas for improvement, including customization of features to suit individual user preferences. Overall, users responded positively to the text messages as a question prompter and reminder for a response, the light touch and casual format of the questions, and frequent opportunities given to users to provide feedback on themselves and work situations that seamlessly memorialized and documented user responses. Meanwhile, areas for enhancement in a future version of TEAMMATES primarily focused on customization of system features, including access to a full keyboard in addition to text-message typing alone, linking text-message prompts to work email so that the task could be better tracked in a more familiar setting, and allowing easier editing of responses. Still other comments pointed to the need for better instructions at the beginning of the exercise to recognize the significant differences in approach of this performance tool compared with the annual performance review.

This study has demonstrated the potential for wider use as a performance evaluation tool to augment and support conventional annual performance reviews or serve as a potential alternate to the annual performance review. How it will be used in the future is dependent on a number of factors, including management's decision on its perceived value to the organization, including time savings and employee willingness to adopt the system. Ongoing study is recommended if TEAMMATES 2.0 is deployed in an experimental or real-world setting, to ensure continuous quality improvement and high user confidence. There is potential for improved performance feedback that is more timely, more authentic, and more effective than the conventional annual performance review, but more research is required.

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APPENDIX 1: Sample Performance Review Form

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM

Employee's Name:	Department:		Division:
Payroll Title (Class): BLANK AST	Date Hired: 2003	Date Assigned Present Classification: 2015	Period Covered By This Appraisal: 07/01/2015 – 04/30/2016
Supervisor's Name:	Supervisor's Payroll Title:		Length of Time You have Supervised this Employee:

1

IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION FACTOR: Consider the importance of each factor in terms of its effect on total job performance: **3 – Critical** **2 – Very important** **1 – Moderately important** **3**	EVALUATION STANDARDS: Please rate the employee according to the following definitions: **E = Exceptional.** Performance well exceeds expectations and is consistently outstanding. **A = Above Expectations.** Performance is consistently beyond expectations. **S = Solid Performance.** Performance consistently fulfills expectations and at times exceeds them. **I = Improvement Needed.** Performance does not consistently meet expectations. **U = Unsatisfactory.** Performance is consistently below expectations. Deficiencies should be addressed as noted in the performance appraisal.

2

JOB FUNCTION REVIEW: Refer to the Functions listed on currently approved job description.

IMPOR- TANCE	RATING	

4

		Function Name

3	S	Administrative Support:1. Office operations: Respond appropriately to complex problems of a confidential and sensitive nature. Using management experience, anticipate and report the problems relating to faculty, staff, and students. Consult with senior staff on problem-solving; monitor and report on resolutions. 2.Support for committees: Assemble, organize, and distribute documents for committees. Provide administrative support and background information for such groups as necessary. 3. Grant and Annual Report preparation: Compile information for grant applications, pub-med, annual and progress reports. 4. Publications: As assigned, and commensurate with experience, assist with drafting and layout of periodic newsletters. Draft or edit updates of text. 5. Process financial transactions including reconciling, entertainment, travel reimbursements, ordering of supplies, t, PO's, invoicing, etc. ensuring compliance with UC and federal policies and regulations. 6. Provide assistance for the annual Director's retreat,
		                                    including scheduling meetings and ordering supplies for events and necessary arrangements for attendees. 7. Backup for control conference room schedules for
		                    and schedule conference rooms within other campus areas. 8. In absence of Executive Assistant, follows up on administrative responsibilities and manage calendars and schedule for the Director. 9. Gather data for special projects and for sections of surveys and reports. 10. Special projects as assigned.

2	S	Express Card Administration: Perform Express Card administration for the in coordination with Fiscal Analyst and Pr. Fiscal Analyst. This is a significant responsibility in that there is potential for fraud and abuse; if not monitored daily and managed appropriately, could leave the University at risk. Must ensure 100% backup is obtained from card users. Ensure sales or use tax is applied. a. Responsible for coordination of the Express Card program for the department. Act as central point of contact for packslips, receipts, follow-up, audit requests. b. In coordination with Fiscal Analyst or Pr. Fiscal Analyst perform post-award auditing of purchases for allowability, allocability, and availability of funding. Monitor use of the cards and ensure that UC purchasing, disbursement, and internal control policies and procedures are observed. c. Utilize Ledger Reviewer to track receipt of all Express Card packing slips on daily basis. Ensure Express Card receipts are received within a timely manner. Enforce 3-strike rule. Keep Fiscal Analyst and Pr. Fiscal Analyst informed of who has outstanding receipts on a monthly basis. d. Provide backup to process and manage associated with Express Card activity. e. Responsible for providing training on proper usage to express card holders, as many default to federal contract and grants. Provide updates concerning changes in UC policies and procedures pertaining to the Express Card program. f. Process re-distribution of expenses as needed per express card holder request. Ensure availability and allowability prior to redistribution of expense. g. Independently investigate and proactively resolve Express Card problems. (as needed) h. Respond to campus Express Card audits. Per email request from Express Card Program (on average 3 per month), gather backup, ensure it has proper justification, and respond to central office. These audits are done as a sampling random audit, often based on the type of vendor used by the cardholder. As expenses are not pre-authorized, ensure the costs are allowable and within policy.

2	S	Pilot Project Administration: A. Provide administrative support for the pilot projects and establishing procedures for administration of these projects. Use independent judgment to manage deadlines and handle changing priorities. B. Receive proposals for pilot project funding in clinical, translational and innovative technology. C. Distribute pilot project proposals to appropriate panel of internal and external reviewers. D. Collect review decisions from panel and triage as appropriate. E. Forward proposal decisions to the Pilot Project Director. F. Independently work with PIs in the navigation of the portal for proposal, budget, and reporting submission requirements. G. Ensure proposals are complete, submitted by deadlines, and in accordance with guidelines of the granting agency. H. As the department expert, act as a liaison between Pilot Project Directors, portal programmers, Administrative staff and Principal Investigators for pre-proposal and full proposal submissions through . Interpret inquiries and direct to appropriate staff when necessary. I. Independently compose, communicate and coordinate all written and verbal communication in regards to Webgrant inquiries. J. Develop/maintain secure electronic file system for proposals to meet IRB/IACUC regulations. K. Ensure semi-annual progress reports and final reports have been received. Review for completeness; including scientific findings, publications, funding, and intellectual property arising from the project. Provide completed reports to the Pilot Project Directors for review on a timely basis.
3	S	Units Administrative Support: , take meeting notes, disseminate relevant information to members. 2. Provide assistance for the website including reorganizing web items, restructuring homepage, and managing content. 3. Provide assistance for the Education website including transferring information from the current site, creating new pages, and updating content. 4. Maintain Facebook, Twitter, YouTube account with most updated news, relevant bulletins and highlights. B. Research Support 1. Management and routing of communication: As the primary public contact for the Director , review, independently evaluate, prioritize and route incoming communications, invitations, and requests related to programs and projects involving the unit. 2. Process financial transactions such as travel reimbursement, purchasing supplies, and . 3. Upkeep databases associated with the success of the unit. 4. Draft letters to industry sponsors, follow-up with action items, and schedule meetings. 5. Provide assistance for the website including reorganizing web items, updating content.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW: To be completed for all employees.

6		5	
3	S	1	**JOB KNOWLEDGE:** Evaluate the use of information, procedures, materials, equipment and techniques required for current job.
3	S	2	**QUALITY:** Evaluate the accuracy, completeness, and follow-through of work.
3	S	3	**PLANNING/ORGANIZING:** Consider effectiveness in response to varying work demands, through developing efficient methods, setting goals and objectives, establishing priorities, and utilizing available resources.
3	S	4	**PRODUCTIVITY:** Evaluate the volume and timeliness of work based on the resources available to accomplish departmental/unit goals and priorities.
3	S	5	**INITIATIVE/INNOVATION:** Evaluate the self-starting ability, resourcefulness, and creativity to formulate and propose innovate solutions and improvement to the duties of the position.
3	S	6	**TEAMWORK/COOPERATION:** Consider effectiveness of working relationships with other employees, students, and faculty to solve problems, improve work processes, share information and resources, and accomplish specific tasks in a professional and ethical manner.
3	S	7	**DEPENDABILITY:** Consider punctuality, regularity in attendance, meeting deadlines, and performing work without close supervision.
3	S	8	**COMMUNICATION:** Evaluate the clarity of ideas expressed, effectiveness of oral and written presentations, and listening to and interacting with others in a helpful, informative and professional manner.
3	S	9	**UCSD STANDARDS:** See Attached Description.

OVERALL APPRAISAL RATING

The overall evaluation is a composite evaluation of the individual functions of the position and the individual performance factors.

_____**Solid Performance**_____

(Rating)

7

_____

_____

COMMENTS SUPPORTING THE OVERALL APPRAISAL OF PERFORMANCE

8

(Attach additional sheets if required)

FUTURE PLANS/ACTIONS/GOALS: Discuss future growth (if appropriate), employee development and other plans/actions dictated by the evaluation.

EMPLOYEE COMMENTS

SIGNATURE OF IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR	DATE	EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: My signature indicates neither
SIGNATURE OF ENDORSING SUPERVISOR	DATE	agreement nor disagreement with the appraisal, but it does indicate that I have reviewed the UCSD Standards, and read the appraisal, and both have been discussed with me. I understand that I may complete the Employee Comments as part of this appraisal.
DEPARTMENT HEAD SIGNATURE	DATE	SIGNATURE DATE

Rev. 6/28/2005

Rev. 1/24/2006

STANDARDS

Employee's Name: ___   **Date of Appraisal:** ___   2016_____

The   Standards represent five areas of individual performance that are critical to the success of the   organization: The   Principles of Community, Diversity, Health and Safety, Customer Service, and Standards for Supervisors and Managers. **Please rate the following organization-wide standards of performance according to the appraisal rating and definitions provided.**

RATING:

_S___   **PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY:** ..." to foster the best possible working and learning environment,   strives to maintain a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism.   faculty, staff and students are expected to support, integrate and practice these basic principles as individuals and in groups..." (stated in part)

- **Understands the significance of the   Principles of Community.**
  Solid performance will be demonstrated when each employee's behavior reflects The   Principles of Community.
- Ensures that the significance of the   Principles of Community is integrated into operational activities within the manager's and supervisors' area of responsibility.

  *(For managers and supervisors only.)*Solid performance will be demonstrated when managers and supervisors communicate and affirm, verbally and in writing, the   Principles of Community to employees and others, as appropriate.

_S___   **DIVERSITY:** A general term for indicating that many people with many differences are present, welcome, and productive in an organization. Diversity refers to culture, race, ethnicity, language, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation.

- **Ensures that policies, practices, services, and behaviors support and accept diversity.**

  (For managers and supervisors only.)

  Solid performance will be demonstrated when the manager reviews, assesses, modifies, applies and monitors policies, practices, services, and behaviors to ensure that they benefit diversity.

- **Ensures that all employees participate in training that supports diversity.**
  Solid performance will be demonstrated when, during the performance review cycle, all employees participate in an activity (e.g., training course, workshop, presentation, dialogue with supervisor, cross cultural program) designed to foster awareness and assist employee performance in a culturally diverse environment.
- **Ensures a diverse work force.**
  Solid performance will be demonstrated when the conduct of outreach and recruitment and the development of employees support diversity. Additionally, when given the opportunity, the composition of staff, supervisors and managers, and the formation of work project teams, support diversity.

_S___   **HEALTH AND SAFETY:** Safety and environmental issues are essential elements of ensuring the continued success of UCSD and its employees. As with any progressive organization, UCSD's primary strength is its people, the many individuals that comprise the faculty, staff, and student populations. To ensure that these individuals have a chance to contribute to the University's mission, each must be afforded a safe, healthy and environmentally sound workplace.

- **Ensures that policies, practices, services, and behaviors support accepted safety, health, and environmental standards.**
  Solid performance will be demonstrated when employees observe safety and environmental compliance standards by practicing safe behaviors and by reporting hazardous conditions.
- Managers and supervisors ensure that all employees participate in safety, health, and environmental protection, and receive appropriate training.

  (For managers and supervisors only.)

Solid performance will be demonstrated when all employees participate in appropriate activities (e.g., training course, workshop, presentation, dialogue with supervisor) designed to foster awareness and assist employees to work safely without degrading the environment.

_S____ CUSTOMER SERVICE: UCSD is a large, complex organization with many internal and external customers. UCSD has an organizational philosophy to provide the best possible products and services.

- **Identifies customer:** Everyone is a customer who directly and indirectly receives knowledge, services, products, and information from the UCSD community.
  Solid performance will be demonstrated when employees identify their customers.
- **Ensures customer satisfaction:** At UCSD, we foster positive partnerships with our customers that recognize their perceptions of urgency and preferences, understand their expectations, and respond consistently with the highest possible levels of service.
  Solid performance will be demonstrated when employees respond to their customers' requests or provide alternatives and referrals in a timely manner.
- **Demonstrates the valuing of employees:** At UCSD, we value, recognize, and acknowledge our employees. We encourage the alignment of employee values and job performance to support customer satisfaction. Therefore, employee morale and job satisfaction are essential to outstanding customer service.

  (For managers and supervisors only)

  Solid performance will be demonstrated when managers and supervisors have an established process to support, recognize, and acknowledge employees for their customer services.
  Solid performance will be demonstrated when employees follow established customer service practices and show personal commitment to customer satisfaction.

SUPERVISION *(For managers and supervisors only)*:
UCSD managers and designated supervisors play a crucial leadership role ensuring the effectiveness and productivity of their units. Their job is to inspire and support employees to achieve the mission and goals of the university. Supervisors demonstrate effective supervision by performance consistent with campus-wide standards for the UCSD Principles of Community diversity, health and safety, and customer service, and for the following:

_NA___ LEADERSHIP: Creating a climate of trust and mutual respect; increasing the potential for employees to be productive and to feel welcome, valued, and motivated. Solid performance will be demonstrated when supervisors or managers:

- Align their practices with the mission and values of their organizations, and discuss them with their employees at least annually
- Exhibit ethical leadership and model the conduct they expect from those they lead
- Perform their duties with honesty, accountability, fairness, and professionalism
- Undertake efforts to create a workplace climate consistent with the UCSD Principles of Community
- Exhibit caring, responsiveness, flexibility, and effective communication skills

_NA___ PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: Managing employee performance in alignment with the mission and goals of the department or unit and consistent with relevant policies and collective bargaining agreements . Solid performance will be demonstrated when supervisors or managers:

- Include employees in these processes
- Develop and communicate the goals of the unit or department and strategies for achieving them
- Clarify the roles of their employees in current job descriptions
- Develop and clearly explain performance expectations
- Provide timely and objective feedback about performance
- Conduct constructive annual performance appraisals
- Discuss learning and development options with their staff at least annually
- Provide reasonable support for professional development in accord with university policy, collective bargaining agreements, and the UCSD Values for Learning and Professional Development
- Encourage employee growth by supporting responsible initiative and innovation as appropriate learning experiences
- Address employee performance problems in consultation with the appropriate UCSD authorities, consistent with university policies and collective bargaining agreements

_NA___ ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Delegating authority consistent with the UCSD Principles of Accountability. Solid performance will be demonstrated when supervisors or managers:

- Delegate tasks to qualified employees and create structures to ensure oversight and accountability without conflict of interest
- Review delegations regularly to confirm that records kept are accurate, complete, current, and secure

_NA___ **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING:** Managing available resources efficiently to provide the best services possible while enabling employees to achieve their work goals. Solid performance will be demonstrated when supervisors or managers:

- Analyze and project needs effectively
- Allocate and manage resources efficiently
- Assign work equitably according to the priorities of the unit or department

EMPLOYEE SELF-APPRAISAL
(Optional)

Employee's Name:__   Date of Appraisal:__   2016_____

Major Job-related Accomplishments

.6/29/2005

105

APPENDIX 2: University of California Performance Management Policy

PPSM 23: Performance Management

Responsible Officer:	Vice President – Systemwide Human Resources
Responsible Office:	SHR – Systemwide Human Resources
Issuance Date:	12/10/2018
Effective Date:	12/10/2018
Last Review Date:	11/15/2018
Scope:	Managers & Senior Professionals and Professional & Support Staff. Performance management for members of the Senior Management Group is covered by the policy on Senior Management Group Performance Management Review Process (Regents Policy 7702).

Contact:	Abby Norris
Title:	Policy Specialist
Email:	Abigail.Norris@ucop.edu
Phone:	(510) 987-0612

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.   POLICY SUMMARY

This Policy provides direction for conducting performance management and performance appraisals for employees in the Managers & Senior Professionals and Professional & Support Staff personnel groups.

II.   DEFINITIONS

Detailed information about common terms used within Personnel Policies for Staff Members can be found in Personnel Policies for Staff Members 2 (Definition of Terms).

Merit Increase: A salary increase designed to reward performance.

III.   POLICY TEXT

A. General

Performance management is an ongoing process of communication between a supervisor and an employee that occurs throughout the year, in support of accomplishing the strategic objectives of the organization. The communication process includes setting objectives, identifying goals, providing feedback, and evaluating results.

B. Performance Appraisal

The performance of each employee shall be appraised at least annually in writing by the employee's immediate supervisor, or more frequently in accordance with local procedures.

The written performance appraisal is an opportunity for the supervisor and employee to review whether previously discussed performance expectations and goals have been met, to discuss professional development opportunities, and to identify options for acquisition of additional skills and knowledge to foster performance improvement and career growth. Additionally, the appraisal provides appropriate documentation to support any recommended merit increases and/or other performance-based awards.

IV.   COMPLIANCE/RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Implementation of the Policy

The Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources is the Responsible Officer for this policy and has the authority to implement the policy. The Responsible Officer may develop procedures or other supplementary information to support the implementation of this policy. Such supporting documentation does not require approval by the President. The Responsible Officer may apply appropriate interpretations to clarify the policy provided that the interpretations do not result in substantive changes to the underlying policy. The Chancellor is authorized to establish and is responsible for local procedures necessary to implement the policy.

In accordance with Personnel Policies for Staff Members 1 (General Provisions), the authorities and responsibilities delegated to the Chancellor in this policy are also delegated to the Executive Vice President–Chief Operating Officer, Vice President–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Principal Officers of the Regents, and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Director. Also in accordance with PPSM 1, the authorities granted in this policy may be redelegated except as otherwise indicated.

B. Revisions to the Policy

The President is the Policy Approver and has the authority to approve policy revisions upon recommendation by the Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources.

The Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources has the authority to initiate revisions to the policy, consistent with approval authorities and applicable *Bylaws* and *Standing Orders* of the Regents.

The Executive Vice President–Chief Operating Officer has the authority to ensure that policies are regularly reviewed, updated, and consistent with other governance policies.

C. Approval of Actions

Actions within this policy must be approved in accordance with local procedures. Chancellors and the Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources are authorized to determine responsibilities and authorities at secondary administrative levels in order to establish local procedures necessary to implement this policy.

All actions applicable to PPSM-covered staff employees who are not Senior Management Group members that exceed this policy, or that are not expressly provided for under any policy, must be approved by the Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources.

D. Compliance with the Policy

The following roles are designated at each location to implement compliance monitoring responsibility for this policy:

The Top Business Officer and/or the Executive Officer at each location will designate the local management office to be responsible for the ongoing reporting of policy compliance.

The Executive Officer is accountable for monitoring and enforcing compliance mechanisms and ensuring that monitoring procedures and reporting capabilities are established.

The Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources is accountable for reviewing the administration of this policy. The Director–Systemwide Human Resources Compliance may periodically monitor compliance to this policy.

E. Noncompliance with the Policy

Noncompliance with the policy is handled in accordance with *Personnel Policies for Staff Members 62, 63, and 64*, pertaining to disciplinary and separation matters.

V.   PROCEDURES

Local Procedures shall be implemented in accordance with the following Universitywide Procedures.

A. General

Performance Management is an ongoing process of communication between a supervisor and an employee that occurs throughout the year, in support of accomplishing the strategic objectives of the organization.

The communication process includes setting objectives, identifying goals, providing feedback, and evaluating results.

Supervisors are strongly encouraged to oversee employee performance and provide feedback throughout the year. In addition to monitoring the results of work activities and evaluating performance, supervisors are encouraged to solicit feedback and input from the employee. Ongoing communication allows the supervisor and employee to address issues in a timely fashion.

B. Performance Appraisal

A regular status employee's performance is appraised in writing at least annually, although such employee's performance may be appraised more frequently in accordance with local procedures.

A probationary employee is evaluated in writing at least once during the probationary period, in accordance with Section III.A of PPSM 22.

The written performance appraisal is an opportunity for the supervisor and employee to review whether previously discussed performance expectations and goals have been met, to discuss professional development opportunities, and to identify options for acquisition of additional skills and knowledge to foster career growth.

Supervisors are strongly encouraged to initiate discussion with the employee in preparation for the written performance appraisal.

The written performance appraisal, documenting individual employee performance, addresses the following at a minimum:

- Communicates whether the supervisor's expectation for job performance and goals has been met

- Provides feedback on any areas of concern and outlines any needed improvement in job performance

Supervisors are encouraged to also address the following in the written performance appraisal:

- Identify opportunities for professional development and options for acquiring additional knowledge and skills to support career growth

- Determine if previously identified performance goals have been met

- Outline future steps necessary to meet professional development and job-related goals

Local procedures may require that the performance appraisal include measurement of additional performance milestones, and indicate the specific steps an employee and/or the supervisor are to follow throughout the performance appraisal process.

Once the written evaluation has been completed and the employee has been given the opportunity to provide feedback, the employee is asked to sign the completed appraisal form. The employee is informed that their signature acknowledges discussion of the contents of the completed appraisal form, not necessarily agreement with it. The employee may add comments to accompany the performance appraisal form.

A copy of the completed performance appraisal form is placed in the employee's personnel file.

VI.   RELATED INFORMATION

- Senior Management Group Performance Management Review Process (Regents Policy 7702) (referenced in Scope of this Policy)

- Personnel Policies for Staff Members 62, 63, and 64 (referenced in Section IV.E. of this Policy)

- Personnel Policies for Staff Members 22 (Probationary Period) (referenced in Section V. of this Policy)

VII.   FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Not applicable.

VIII.   REVISION HISTORY

Policy change effective as of **February 1, 2021**: Updated definition of "merit increase."

Policy changes effective as of **December 10, 2018:**

- Removed existing gendered pronouns and replaced with gender-neutral language.

- Updated web and document links, office titles, and typographical amendments.

- Remediated to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

Policy changes effective as of **July 1, 2012:**

- Reformatted into the standard University of California policy template.

- Removed reference to performance reviews for Academic Deans and Provosts (see Academic Personnel Policy 240, Deans and Academic Personnel Policy 246, Faculty Administrators (100% Time)).

- Removed reference to performance reviews for Chancellors (see *Senior Management Group Performance Management Review Process* (Regents Policy 7702)).

As a result of the issuance of this policy, the following documents are rescinded as of the effective date of this policy and are no longer applicable:

- *Staff Personnel Policy 255 (Performance Evaluation)*, dated December 1, 1985

APPENDIX 3 Performance Evaluation Provisions

ARTICLE 29
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A. **DEFINITION**

Performance Evaluation is a constructive process to acknowledge the performance of a non-probationary career employee. An employee's evaluation shall be sufficiently specific to inform and guide the employee in the performance of her/his duties. Performance evaluation is not in and of itself a disciplinary procedure.

B. **EVALUATION OF EMPLOYEES**

1. The performance of each employee shall be evaluated at least annually, in accordance with a process established by the University. Nothing in this Article shall prohibit the written evaluation of any employee more frequently than once annually.

2. The performance of non-probationary career employees shall be evaluated in writing at least annually on a schedule and in a manner in accordance with the campus/hospital/LBNL determined performance evaluation procedure(s). At the time of evaluation, the employee shall be given a copy of the evaluation and shall have the opportunity to provide written comments regarding the evaluation or add relevant materials which may supplement or enhance the evaluation. The comments or additional relevant materials, if any, shall be attached to the employee's evaluation and placed in the employee's personnel file.

3. In the event a non-probationary career employee does not receive the written evaluation, the employee's performance for the year period shall be deemed to have been satisfactory for the purposes of salary increase.

4. The annual period within which written performance evaluations of non-probationary career employees are to be provided shall be determined by the University on a campus by campus basis.

5. Except in the case of minor or non-substantive changes, the University will give at least forty-five (45) calendar days notice prior to implementing a new performance form or written performance standard and will provide a copy of the proposed form or written standard to UPTE.

C. **NOTICE**

1. An employee who receives an overall "needs improvement" rating shall have received notice of her/his deficiencies, including information about how to correct such deficiencies, prior to receiving such overall evaluation.

2. In the event an employee has not received notice of deficiencies in sufficient time to correct her/his deficiencies prior to receiving the overall "needs improvement" rating, s/he may request and, within thirty (30) calendar days shall receive, a re-evaluation of her/his performance. The thirty (30) day period may be extended by mutual agreement.

D. **DISPUTES**

1. A non-probationary career employee who receives a written performance evaluation with an overall rating of less than satisfactory may file a grievance pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 - Grievance Procedure of this Agreement. Such grievance concerning the content of a performance evaluation rating the employee as less than satisfactory shall be eligible to be processed through Steps 1 and 2 of the Grievance Procedure but shall not be eligible for review at Step 3 of the Grievance Procedure. The remedy for such a grievance shall be limited to revision of the section(s) being grieved and revision of the rating(s) in question.

2. Disputes arising regarding the performance evaluation of employees, including but not limited to the form, timing, procedure, impact and effects, shall not be subject to Article 10 - Grievance Procedure of this Agreement, except as set forth in Section D.1. above.

ARTICLE 29
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A. **DEFINITION**

Performance Evaluation is a constructive process to acknowledge the performance of a non-probationary career employee. An employee's evaluation shall be sufficiently specific to inform and guide the employee in the performance of her/his duties. Performance evaluation is not in and of itself a disciplinary procedure.

B. **EVALUATION OF EMPLOYEES**

1. The performance of each employee shall be evaluated at least annually, in accordance with a process established by the University. Nothing in this Article shall prohibit the written evaluation of any employee more frequently than once annually.

2. The performance of non-probationary career employees shall be evaluated in writing at least annually on a schedule and in a manner in accordance with the campus/hospital/LBNL determined performance evaluation procedure(s). At the time of evaluation, the employee shall be given a copy of the evaluation and shall have the opportunity to provide written comments regarding the evaluation or add relevant materials which may supplement or enhance the evaluation. The comments or additional relevant materials, if any, shall be attached to the employee's evaluation and placed in the employee's personnel file.

3. In the event a non-probationary career employee does not receive the written evaluation, the employee's performance for the year period shall be deemed to have been satisfactory for the purposes of salary increase.

4. The annual period within which written performance evaluations of non-probationary career employees are to be provided shall be determined by the University on a campus by campus basis.

5. Except in the case of minor or non-substantive changes, the University will give at least forty-five (45) calendar days notice prior to implementing a new performance form or written performance standard and will provide a copy of the proposed form or written standard to UPTE.

C. **NOTICE**

1. An employee who receives an overall "needs improvement" rating shall have received notice of her/his deficiencies, including information about how to correct such deficiencies, prior to receiving such overall evaluation.

2. In the event an employee has not received notice of deficiencies in sufficient time to correct her/his deficiencies prior to receiving the overall "needs improvement" rating, s/he may request and, within thirty (30) calendar days shall receive, a re-evaluation of her/his performance. The thirty (30) day period may be extended by mutual agreement.

D. **DISPUTES**

1. A non-probationary career employee who receives a written performance evaluation with an overall rating of less than satisfactory may file a grievance pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 - Grievance Procedure of this Agreement. Such grievance concerning the content of a performance evaluation rating the employee as less than satisfactory shall be eligible to be processed through Steps 1 and 2 of the Grievance Procedure but shall not be eligible for review at Step 3 of the Grievance Procedure. The remedy for such a grievance shall be limited to revision of the section(s) being grieved and revision of the rating(s) in question.

2. Disputes arising regarding the performance evaluation of employees, including but not limited to the form, timing, procedure, impact and effects, shall not be subject to Article 10 - Grievance Procedure of this Agreement, except as set forth in Section D.1. above.

ARTICLE 26
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A.   **EVALUATION**

1.   Performance Evaluation is a constructive process to acknowledge the performance of an employee. An employee's evaluation shall be sufficiently specific to inform and guide the employee in the performance of her/his duties. Performance standards are guidelines for performing the duties of a specific job. Performance standards and guidelines for performing the duties of a specific job shall be reasonable. The evaluation of each employee shall be based on the individual employee's performance.

2.   The purposes of the performance evaluation include, but are not limited to, the following:

a.   to accurately assess the individual employee's performance during the period under review;

b.   to identify and acknowledge positive elements of job performance;

c.   to identify deficiencies in performance;

d.   to provide or identify measures to correct such deficiencies; and

e.   to identify potential career development objectives and to provide strategies for achieving those objectives.

3.   Except in the case of minor and non-substantive changes, the University will, 60 calendar days prior to implementing a new performance evaluation form or written performance standard, provide a copy of the proposed form or written standard to Teamsters Local 2010. If Teamsters Local 2010 provides a written request to meet and discuss within 30 days of the notice date, the University shall meet and discuss with Teamsters Local 2010 regarding the change. In addition, if Teamsters Local 2010 requests in writing to meet about any alleged significant change in performance standards or performance evaluation form, the University shall meet and discuss within 30 days of Teamsters Local 2010's request regarding the change, if any.

4.   Performance evaluation is not in and of itself a disciplinary procedure.

5.   CX-Unit employees who receive an overall rating of "needs improvement" (or equivalent) shall have been informed of any such deficiencies, including information about how to correct such deficiencies, prior to receiving the annual written evaluation.

6.   The performance of each non-probationary career employee shall be evaluated at least annually, in accordance with a process established by each location. In the event a non-probationary career employee does not receive a performance evaluation within 45 calendar days of the date the performance evaluation was

due, the employee's overall evaluation shall be "meets expectations" (or equivalent). The location will inform each new, non-probationary, career employee or each employee transferred or rehired to a different department, when they should expect a performance evaluation. In the event a non-probationary career employee does not receive the written evaluation, the employee may take the following action:

a. Within 15 calendar days of the date the written evaluation was due but not received, the employee shall make a written request for the evaluation to the employee's immediate supervisor. When an employee makes such a request, an evaluation shall be completed within 30 calendar days of the request, unless the parties mutually agree otherwise.

B. **EMPLOYEE RESPONSE TO AN EVALUATION**

1. **Acknowledgment or Affirmation of Evaluation**

    a. An employee may acknowledge that s/he has received the performance evaluation by signing the evaluation and returning it to her/his supervisor. The employee's signature does not reflect either agreement or disagreement with the evaluation.

    b. If the employee does not sign the performance evaluation, the supervisor shall state on the evaluation form that the employee did not sign the evaluation. The supervisor's statement shall identify the day on which s/he provided the performance evaluation to the employee.

2. **Employee Rebuttal of or Comments about the Evaluation**

    a. Rebuttal - An employee shall be provided one (1) week to attach rebuttal information and/or documentation to the evaluation. The department head shall review timely-submitted rebuttal information prior to finalizing the evaluation and sending it to the employee's Personnel File. For those locations which utilize an online performance evaluation system, rebuttal filings shall be filed in accordance with the system.

    b. Comments – Within thirty (30) calendar days after receiving a University performance evaluation, an employee may write comments pertaining to her/his evaluation or add relevant materials, which may supplement, or enhance the evaluation. When the University receives such written comments or materials from the employee, they shall be attached to the performance evaluation and placed in the employee's personnel file in which performance evaluations are maintained.

3. **Placement of the Evaluation in the Employee's Personnel File**

    Employees are provided one (1) week to submit rebuttal information before the University forwards the evaluation to the employee's personnel file. The performance evaluation shall be placed in the employee's personnel file after

receiving either the employee's signature, or the supervisor's statement, in accordance with Section B.1. above, or after completion of the rebuttal process in accordance with Section B.2.a. above.

C.   GRIEVABILITY

     1.   A non-probationary career employee who receives a written performance evaluation with an overall rating of less than satisfactory, may file a grievance pursuant to the provisions of Article 7 – Grievance Procedure of this Agreement. Such grievance concerning the content of a performance evaluation rating the employee as less than satisfactory shall be eligible to be processed through Steps 1 and 2 of the Grievance Procedure, but shall not be eligible for review at Step 3 of the Grievance Procedure. The remedy for such a grievance shall be limited to revision of the section(s) being grieved and revision of the rating(s) in question.

     2.   Disputes arising regarding the performance evaluation of employees, including but not limited to the form, timing, procedure, impact and effects, shall not be subject to Article 7 - Grievance Procedure or Article 3 - Arbitration Procedure of this Agreement, with the exception of Section C.1, above.

APPENDIX 4: University of California SMART Goals Guide

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SMART Goals:

A How to Guide

1

Table of Contents

2

How to Write SMART Goals:
A Guide for Managers and Employees

What are SMART Goals?
- Statements of the important results you are working to accomplish
- Designed in a way to foster clear and mutual understanding of what constitutes expected levels of performance and successful professional development

What is the SMART criteria?

S	Specific	What will be accomplished? What actions will you take?
M	Measurable	What data will measure the goal? (How much? How well?
A	Achievable	Is the goal doable? Do you have the necessary skills and resources?
R	Relevant	How does the goal align with broader goals? Why is the result important?
T	Time-Bound	What is the time frame for accomplishing the goal?

How do I decide the right scope for my SMART Goals? (How big? How many?)

SMART goals are meant to address all of your major job responsibilities.
Remember, goals are intended to focus attention and resources on what is most important so that you can be successful in achieving your priorities. SMART Goals are goals for your day-to-day job.

- Common types of goals are to:
  - Increase something
  - Make something
  - Improve something
  - Reduce something
  - Save something
  - Develop someone (yourself!)

Where to start?
1. Start by thinking about your whole job and the broad areas (or "buckets") of responsibility and results for which you are accountable.
2. Develop a goal statement for each bucket. To get the scope right, remember to focus on end results not tasks.

3

3. Goals should be high level enough to encompass the core outcomes for which you are responsible, but specific and clear enough so you will be able to measure success.
4. Goals should be on-going job responsibilities and any new projects, assignments, priorities, or initiatives that are specific to this performance cycle.
5. Having too many goals can be an indicator that your goals are scoped at too low a level and are focused more on tasks than on end results.
6. If it seems that your goals are becoming too numerous and task-oriented, it may be helpful to consider combining several goal statements into a broader outcome area.

How to write your S-M-A-R-T goal

S – Specific

When setting a goal, be specific about what you want to accomplish. Think about this as the mission statement for your goal. This isn't a detailed list of how you're going to meet a goal, but it should include an answer to the popular 'w' questions:

- Who – Consider who needs to be involved to achieve the goal (this is especially important when you're working on a group project).

- What – Think about exactly what you are trying to accomplish and don't be afraid to get very detailed.

- When – You'll get more specific about this question under the "time-bound" section of defining S.M.A.R.T. goals, but you should at least set a time frame.

- Where – This question may not always apply, especially if you're setting personal goals, but if there's a location or relevant event, identify it here.

- Which – Determine any related obstacles or requirements. This question can be beneficial in deciding if your goal is realistic. For example, if the goal is to open a baking business, but you've never baked anything before, that might be an issue. As a result, you may refine the specifics of the goal to be "Learn how to bake in order to open a baking business."

- Why – What is the reason for the goal? When it comes to using this method for employees, the answer will likely be along the lines of company advancement or career development.

4

- "S" actions may include:

Oversee	Update	Write
Coordinate	Upgrade	Process
Supervise	Develop	Provide
Manage	Create	Maintain
Plan	Implement	Reconcile
Support	Evaluate	Direct
Transition	Produce	Administer

- Note that this list does not include verbs like "improve," "reduce," or "increase" (e.g. "Improve customer service" or "reduce cost." These imply the direction that you want a result to move in, but don't do much to explain the role or specific action that you will take to accomplish this change.

M – Measurable

What metrics are you going to use to determine if you meet the goal? This makes a goal more tangible because it provides a way to measure progress. If it's a project that's going to take a few months to complete, then set some milestones by considering specific tasks to accomplish. Milestones are a series of steps along the way that when added up will result in the completion of your main goal.

- As the "M" in SMART states, there should be a source of information to measure or determine whether a goal has been achieved.
- The M is a direct (or possibly indirect) indicator of what success for a particular goal will look like.
- Sometimes measurement is difficult and managers and employees will need to work together to identify the most relevant and feasible data sources and collection methods.
- Data collection efforts needed to measure a goal can be included in that goal's action plan.
- Even if a perfect, direct measurement source is not immediately feasible for a given goal, the discussion about the desired end result (why this goal is important) and what the measurement options are (what success might look like) is an important and valuable part of performance planning.
- Measurement methods can be both quantitative (productivity results, money saved or earned, etc.) and qualitative (client testimonials, surveys, etc.).

5

- Some typical data types and data collection methods may include:

DATA TYPES	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Quality/accuracy rates	Automated reports
Amounts produced	Audits, tests
Revenue generated	Surveys
Productivity rates	Work products, samples
Customer Satisfaction	Other documents

A – Achievable

This focuses on how important a goal is to you and what you can do to make it attainable and may require developing new skills and changing attitudes. The goal is meant to inspire motivation, not discouragement. Think about:

- how to accomplish the goal,
- if you have the tools/skills needed,
- if not, consider what it would take to attain them.

R – Relevant

Relevance refers focusing on something that makes sense with the broader business goals. For example, if the goal is to launch a new program or service, it should be something that's in alignment with the overall business/department objectives. Your team may be able to launch a new program, but if your division is not prioritizing launching that type of new programs, then the goal wouldn't be relevant.

T – Time-Bound

Anyone can set goals, but if it lacks realistic timing, chances are you're not going to succeed. Providing a target date for deliverables is imperative. Ask specific questions about the goal deadline and what can be accomplished within that time period. If the goal will take three months to complete, it's useful to define what should be achieved half-way through the process. Providing time constraints also creates a sense of urgency.

The Easiest Way to Write S.M.A.R.T. Goals

When it comes to writing S.M.A.R.T. goals, ask yourself and other team members a lot of questions. The answers will help fine-tune your strategy, ensuring the goals are something that's actually attainable. Utilize the template provided in the appendix as a guide.

6

This doesn't have to be a daunting experience; in fact, it should be quite illuminating. Below we demonstrate how to write S.M.A.R.T. goals for two typical business scenarios: completing a project and improving personal performance. We've also created an easy-to-use S.M.A.R.T. goals template and worksheet to help you get started.

Examples of Creating a SMART Goal

Here are two examples of initial goals we'll use to walk through this process:

1. I want to complete a project

2. I want to improve my performance

This is a typical approach to creating goals, but both of these are very vague. With the current wording, the goals probably aren't going to be attainable. The statements lack specifics, timelines, motivation, and a reality check.

Now, let's use the S.M.A.R.T. goals formula to clarify both and create new and improved goals.

Goal: I want to complete a project

- **Specific:** Many people are accessing our current site from their mobile devices. Since it's not a responsive site, it provides a poor experience for customers. I want to launch a mobile app for my company website by the end of June, which requires involvement from software development, design, and marketing.

- **Measurable**: Creating a mobile app for our company site will require a lot of resources. To make it worthwhile, I'd like to have 50,000 installs of the site within six months of launch. I'd also like to show a 5% conversion rate from customers using the mobile site.

- **Achievable**: The departments that will be involved have signed-off on creating a mobile app. I'll need to manage the project and set milestones to keep everyone motivated and on target.

- **Relevant**: Improving the customer experience on mobile devices is a core initiative for my company this year.

- **Time-Bound**: In order to achieve 50,000 mobile app installs and a 5% conversion rate by the end of the fiscal year, the app will need to be launched by Q2 with a robust marketing campaign that should continue through the end of the year.

7

Goal: I want to improve my performance

- **Specific**: I received low marks on my ability to use PowerPoint at my last performance review. Improving my skills requires that I learn how to use PowerPoint efficiently and practice using it by creating various presentations. I'd like to be more proficient using PowerPoint in time for my next review in six months.

- **Measurable**: By the time of my next review, I should be able to create presentations that incorporate graphs, images, and other media in a couple of hours. I should also be able to efficiently use and create templates in PowerPoint that my coworkers can also use.

- **Achievable**: Improving my PowerPoint skills is instrumental in moving forward in my career and receiving a better performance review. I can set time aside every week to watch PowerPoint tutorials and even enroll in an online class that can teach me new skills. I can also ask coworkers and my manager for PowerPoint tips.

- **Relevant**: Working with PowerPoint is currently 25% of my job. As I move up in the company, I'll need to spend 50% of my time creating PowerPoint presentations. I enjoy my career and want to continue to grow within this company.

- **Time-Bound**: In six months, I should be proficient in PowerPoint ensuring it only occupies 25% of my workload instead of the nearly 40% of the time it occupies now.

Once you go through and write your goals according to each S.M.A.R.T. characteristic, you can then combine and consolidate all the work you've done into one S.M.A.R.T. goal.

S.M.A.R.T. goal: I want to complete a project

- **Description**: Improving the customer experience on mobile devices is a core initiative for my company this year, so we are going to create a mobile app. By the end of the fiscal year, there should be 50,000 installs of the mobile app we develop, and it should produce a 5% conversion rate. We'll build the mobile app in-house and launch it by the end of June with an app-related marketing campaign that will continue to the end of the year.

- **Milestone**: Mobile app launches end of June.

8

- **Deadline**: End of the fiscal year.

S.M.A.R.T. goal: I want to improve my performance

- **Description**: To grow in my career, I need to improve my PowerPoint skills. By taking online classes and reviewing tutorials, I'll improve my PowerPoint skills so that it only requires 25% of my work time.

- **Milestone**: Complete an online PowerPoint course in three months.

- **Deadline**: Next employee review in six months.

9

Appendix

10

Template for writing a S.M.A.R.T. Goal

Crafting S.M.A.R.T. Goals are designed to help you identify if what you want to achieve is realistic and determine a deadline. When writing S.M.A.R.T. Goals use concise language, but include relevant information. These are designed to help you succeed, so be positive when answering the questions.

Initial Goal *(Write the goal you have in mind)*:
_____

1. Specific *(What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?)*
_____
_____
_____

2. Measurable *(How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?)*:
_____
_____
_____

3. Achievable *(Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve?)*:
_____
_____
_____

4. Relevant *(Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall objectives?)*:
_____
_____
_____

5. Time-bound *(What's the deadline and is it realistic?)*:
_____
_____
_____

S.M.A.R.T. Goal *(Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed)*:
_____
_____
_____

11

More SMART Goal Examples

Ongoing

- Provide high quality customer service resulting in a 90% customer satisfaction rating from external customers on accuracy, timeliness and courtesy measures on an ongoing basis.
- On an ongoing basis, reconcile the department financial reports by the 15th of every month with no increase in reconciliation errors.
- On an ongoing basis, accurately process and dispatch 95% of high priority calls for police, fire and medical services.
- On an ongoing basis, dispatch 82% of high priority calls for police, fire and medical services within established timeframes.
- Resolve 90% of complaints through a collaborative process without need for formal mediation on an ongoing basis.
- Conduct education, monitoring and enforcement to ensure that 98% of agricultural and pest control businesses are in compliance with all pesticide regulatory requirements on an ongoing basis.
- Manage and support effective performance resulting in achievement of 75% of program and individual performance targets by the end of the fiscal year.
- Manage the department budget to stay within appropriations and accomplish 85% of service results by the end of the fiscal year.
- Coach and support my direct reports resulting in attainment of 85% of all performance plan goals and feedback from direct reports that I provided them with clear expectations, meaningful feedback and fair performance evaluations by the end of the fiscal year.

New Project/Performance Cycle-Specific

- By March 2011, develop and implement a customer service plan that results in department staff reporting that they are clear about expectations for excellent customer service and have the skills and support to perform at that level and that results in customers reporting that they receive excellent customer service.
- Transition to a new automated case management system with minimal affects on customer service by developing a training program that ensures all staff can process 30 cases per day no later than three months after the end of the training classes.
- Reduce overtime in the department from 150 hours per month to 50 hours per month by the end of the fiscal year with no increase in incident reports.
- Develop a quality improvement process for the sanitary sewer system that reduces the failure rate to 1% by 12/31/11.
- Create a partnership with at least 5 local cities to deliver two compliance-related training workshops resulting in $_____ improvement in Net County Cost by 6/30/11.
- By 11/30/11, update the employee handbook to include a searchable intranet version that employees find easy to use and informative.
- Complete the Energy Watch Program to reduce countywide carbon emissions by 605 tons by the end of the fiscal year.

12

- Conduct outreach and education that reduces the amount of illegal dumping into the streets and drainage channels by __% by June 30, 2011.
- Develop and implement vehicle replacement plan to increase the Average Fuel Economy to 30 Miles per Gallon by 2012 for Midsize and Compact Vehicles and to increase the average Miles per Gallon on the total fleet to 25 MPG by 2016.
- Implement Evidence Based Probation Service (EPBS) practices in order to reduce recidivism among participants by __% by June 30, 2011.

Development Goals

- By June 30, 2011, develop and apply upgraded computer skills that enable me to produce budget reconciliation reports each month in a timely and accurate fashion.
- Develop and practice my coaching skills so that my direct reports report that they feel more satisfied with their work and able to perform at a higher level and such that I achieve a 30/70 split between coaching and doing by June 30, 2011.
- By June 30, 2011, complete course work and attain a CSAC credential to enhance my skills as an effective leader as measured by feedback from my supervisor and the accomplishment of my performance plan goals.

13

APPENDIX 5: Key Questions for Changes to Performance Appraisal System

Measurement function issues	Y	N	?
Has the performance appraisal system been reviewed and enhanced in the last 2–5 years?			
Have the goals of the system been identified and prioritized?			
Is the appraisal instrument design aligned with the highest priority goals of the appraisal system?			
Are the competencies/behaviors included in the appraisal instruments consistent with competencies, behaviors, and tasks identified from job analyses or an organizational competency model?			
Do multiple sources (e.g., customers, peers, and subordinates) supply input to the performance appraisals?			
Are all appraisers familiar with the recipient's job and performance standards for that job?			
Do all appraisers have adequate opportunity to observe the recipient's performance?			
Are all appraisers trained in the use of the system?			
Are appraisers held accountable for the quality of their ratings?			
Does a second level manager review all the performance appraisals and evaluate their quality?			
Are performance ratings regularly evaluated for evidence of reliability, validity, and rater biases?			
Are performance ratings evaluated for evidence of adverse impact?			
Is the usability and acceptance of the performance appraisal system formally assessed (e.g., with surveys, focus groups, or interviews) every 2–3 years for the following stakeholders? • Appraisers • Recipients • Management			

Note. From Barnes-Farrell & Lynch (2003).

Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral student at the UC Davis School of Education CANDEL leadership program conducting a research study on an alternative to the annual performance review. People have different feelings about the performance review and this study explores whether a new method called TEAMMATES (**TE**chnology **A**ssisting **M**ulti-level **MA**nagers **T**o **E**ngage **S**taff) could be better than the current performance review process.

You are invited to participate as you are employed at the university. I am seeking staff employees or supervisors who have worked at the university for at least 2 years.

Participation involves a 1-hour orientation and interview, receiving and sending occasional text messages, a mid-point check-in at 2 ½ months, and a concluding interview or focus group for 1 hour. No software will be installed on your phone, but you will send and receive text messages.

If you are interested in learning more, please visit http://somup.com/cqnZqdnrmY.

Participation in this study will be up to 2 hours of interviews over a 6-month period. Gift cards to Amazon or Starbucks for up to $60 will be offered to volunteers who complete the study.

Participating in this study will not replace your current performance review. <u>I will never see your actual performance review</u>. You are not expected to personally benefit by participating in this study, but participating may improve the TEAMMATES system to be used more widely.

This study is overseen by the human subjects board at UC Davis as well as my faculty advisor, Dr. Paul Porter.

If you are interested in participating in this study, or to learn more without obligation, please contact Eric at xxxx or xxxx.

Thank you for your interest, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Eric Mah
Doctoral Student

APPENDIX 7: Interview Questions

Interview questions for employees, with prompters as needed.

Script: There are no wrong answers and your feedback will help identify the strengths and shortcomings of the TEAMMATES process as an alternative to the conventional annual performance review.

Instructions: Bulleted items can be use as prompters as needed.

Warmup:
1. Tell me what it was like to get the first set of text messages?
   - How comfortable were you with responding?
   - How easy or hard was it to answer the questions? Why do you say that?
   - What discouraged or prevented you from responding?

2. How often did you have performance conversations with your supervisor under the conventional annual performance review model?
   - How would you compare the text messaging system with the annual performance review?

3. Did you communicate with your supervisor about performance outside of the text message system?
   - If yes, how did you feel during the conversation?
   - Who initiated the conversation?

4. Thinking about the self-evaluation aspect of the annual performance review, and the text messaging system: How does receiving more frequent, mini self-evaluations compare to a single employee self-evaluation at once a year?

5. What did you think or feel when you responded to the system but never received any word or feedback?
   - Eric should explain why this happened

6. Thinking about the annual performance review, and the text messaging system overall: Does the thought of completing annual performance review cause more stress or anxiety level, or do the more frequent unannounced text message questions?
   - Why did you answer this way?

7. What would your reaction be if you could simply use these check-ins instead of having to perform an annual performance review?

8. How important is the face-to-face annual sit-down conversation to you? Why did you answer this way?

9. Reflecting back on the text message system, what about anything did you dislike, or think can be improved?
   - Can you describe anything which would have made it easier to use?

- Were there things that were confusing, difficult to understand, or ambiguous? If so, could you describe them?

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Interview questions for supervisor, with prompters as needed.

Script: There are no wrong answers and your feedback will help identify the strengths and shortcomings of the TEAMMATES process as an alternative to the conventional annual performance review.

Instructions: Bulleted items can be use as prompters as needed.

Warmup:
1. Tell me what it was like to get the first set of text messages?
   - How comfortable were you with responding?
   - How easy or hard was it to answer the questions? Why do you say that?
   - What discouraged or prevented you from responding?

2. How often did you have performance conversations with your employee [NAME] under the conventional annual performance review model?
   - How would you compare the text messaging system with the annual performance review?

3. Did you communicate with your employee [NAME] about performance outside of the text message system?
   - If yes, how did you feel during the conversation?
   - Who initiated the conversation?

4. Thinking about the self-evaluation aspect of the annual performance review, and the text messaging system: How does receiving more frequent, mini self-evaluations compare reviewing a single employee self-evaluation at once a year?

5. Thinking about the annual performance review, and the text messaging system overall: Does the thought of completing annual performance review cause more stress or anxiety level, or do the more frequent unannounced text message questions?
   - Why did you answer this way?

6. What would your reaction be if you could simply use these check-ins instead of having to perform an annual performance review?

7. How important is the face-to-face annual sit-down conversation to you? Why did you answer this way?

8. Reflecting back on the text message system, what about anything did you dislike, or think can be improved?
   - Can you describe anything which would have made it easier to use?
   - Were there things that were confusing, difficult to understand, or ambiguous? If so, could you describe them?

9. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Semistructured interview for supervisor low responders, who did not respond to all text messages

As a supervisor, it can be difficult to motivate for performance reviews. Part of this study asked for you to complete feedback on your direct reports more often. You may not have been able to. You were not the only one and it is important for this study understand your individual reasons or circumstances.

1. What did you think about when you received the text notification to evaluate an employee?

2. What were the distractors or discouragers for you?

3. Can you describe any skepticism you had about this text messaging tool for performance evaluation?

4. How do you feel about the concept now?

5. Why do you complete the classic annual performance review? How did those motivators compare to this experiment?

6. How would you characterize the effectiveness text messaging evaluations compared to the classic annual performance review?

7. What, if anything, would have made it more likely for you to respond to the text messages?

8. Is there anything you can think of to make the performance review process better than what it is today?

APPENDIX 8: TEAMMATES Standard Text Messaging Questions

1) If you can, please give an example when you recently provided helpful guidance to a coworker or client? Describe what you did.

2) If you can, please give an example of a positive training, teaching, or learning moment between you and a coworker or client?

3) Please give a recent example of when a problem arose and you contributed to the solution? Describe what happened and your role.

4) Give a recent example of a project you led, or guidance you gave, that did NOT go as intended. What happened; what was the outcome?

5) In the last month, did you face a situation you didn't know how to handle? What did you do?

6) Can you think of a professional development opportunity or training you are interested in?

7) Have you had anyone on the team who didn't perform as you expected? Please describe what happened.

8) Tell me about the best achievement in the last month by someone you work with. Who met/exceeded your expectations and how?

9) Over the last month, how would you rate your own performance? 1 = Exceeded goals, 2 = Achieved most goals, 3 = Missed a few goals
Follow-up: Why did you rate yourself this way?

10) Was there a time over the last month, your supervisor or coworker did something which surprised you? What happened and why was it surprising?

11) Was there someone you wanted to give praise or express concern about? Tell me about it.

12) Is there something your supervisor can stop doing—or change—which would make your work easier, more efficient, or more satisfying? I'd like to know.

13) Your supervisor is committed to making changes in the office to make it a better place. Anything else you want to mention?

APPENDIX 9: Sample Light-Touch Reports

TEAMMATES Light Touch Report #1
Team Member: Laura
Supervisor: Sabune
Questions sent: 2/4/2020 12:53 PM
Questions answered by Team Member: 2/4/2020 12:53 PM (8:29 PM) − 8:37 PM

Question	Answer / Supervisor Answer	Supervisor Comment
Q1. If you can, please give an example of a positive training, teaching, or learning moment between you and a coworker or client?	A1. I had a call with a client who wanted to strategize on a new candidate coming to UCSD as a staff with an immigration status. The client called me, even though I do not process staff appointments and visa, because she knew she would more information from me than HR. We were able to strategize on the appropriate job title, timeline and minimize fees to the department.	Recently taught new apt analyst how to more effective manage cases with visas based on lead times for apt coupled with visa. Has direct impact to client and candidate and potential for significant negative press with clients if not managed appropriately
Q2. In the last month, did you face a situation you didn't know how to handle? What did you do?	A2. Yes, had a feeling that I was overwhelmed with the many different tasks and initiatives that I had a mini break down. Spoke to my manager to help prioritize so I didn't feel so stressed out and overwhelmed.	Respond to employees request for additional compensation with questionable motives. Told employee would look into it. Escalated request to managed.
Q3. Tell me about the best achievement in the last month by someone you work with. Who met/exceeded your expectations and how?	A3. Skip	Skip
Q4. Over the last month, how would you rate your own performance? 1=Exceeded goals, 2=Achieved most goals, 3=Missed a few goals

Why did you rate yourself this way? | A4. 2. Some of the goals were tied to UCPath that I was dependent on others to respond | 2. Too many demands and not enough hours or resources to accomplish them. Feel accomplished with client portfolio and leading team |

TEAMMATES Light Touch Report #2
Team Member: Laura
Supervisor: Sabune
Questions sent: 2/4/2020 12:53 PM
Questions answered by Team Member: 2/4/2020 12:53 PM (8:29 PM) – 8:37 PM

Question	Answer / *Supervisor Answer*	Supervisor Comment
Q1. If you can, please give an example when you recently provided helpful guidance to a coworker or client? Describe what you did.	A1. A faculty member had negative comments included in their teaching evaluations. In reviewing the file it looked strong for consideration of another action. I advised the department and they supported my recommendation. I was asked to also reach out to the faculty member and explain the issue. I asked him to provide me the context in which the comments were delivered and we were able to address the comments to move forward.	
Q2. Please give a recent example of when a problem arose and you contributed to the solution? Describe what happened and your role.	A2. An employee was delayed in processing a promotion file for an academic. I reviewed the candidates history and noticed his effort was less than 100%. I recommended to the employee that they can explain what happened and provide the PI with the option of moving forward but we still needed referees or submit a no change with potential increase effort so employee would not be adversely impacted but also recognize with the second option, academic would likely need to increase hours worked to reflect increase in effort if any.	
Q3. Have you had anyone on the team who didn't perform as you expected? Please describe what happened.	A3. Currently I have an employee who has had difficulty managing deadlines. I have scheduled more frequent meetings to keep updated on her progress and will follow up after our meetings with a priority list that I follow up with her on the following week. It has made her more accountable. I also met with LR to discuss impact and options and will be moving forward with a counseling memo	
Q4. Over the last month, how would you rate your own performance? 1=Exceeded goals, 2=Achieved most goals, 3=Missed a few goals Why did you rate yourself this way?	A4. 2. I've taken on a new functional area and with a new team we are looking at expectations and turnaround times. Overall the team has been solid in their performance. I also own a portfolio and have been able to meet most of my deadlines. In holding my Reviews team accountable to the deadlines I am still mindful of the new system they are working in so I give them a little more flexibility to meet the deadlines but realize that can be a slippery slope.	

Supervisor did not respond to this check in.

143

APPENDIX 10: Participant Information

Pseudonym	Sex	Years in unit	Status	Unit
Sally	F	10+	Supervisor	2
Connie	F	10+	Employee	2
Sheila	F	10+	Supervisor	1
Anne	F	<3	Employee	1
Sharon	F	3–10	Supervisor	1
Anya	F	3–10	Employee	1
Sabune	F	10+	Supervisor	1
Laura	F	10+	Employee	1
Stella	F	10+	Supervisor	1
Kelly	F	10+	Employee	1
Rona	F	3–10	Employee	1
Paige	F	10+	Employee	1
Seth	M	10+	Supervisor	3
Lucas	M	3–10	Employee	3
Steven	M	10+	Supervisor	3
Gloria	F	3–10	Employee	3
Scarlett	F	10+	Supervisor	2
Karen	F	<3	Employee	2
James	M	<3	Employee	2
Simon	M	<3	Supervisor	2
Tammy	F	3–10	Employee	2