

# Performance Appraisals: More Harm than Help ?

I started my career in HR. I was educated in, and then spent years staunchly supporting, a core foundation of effective HRM practice; Performance Management.

Every year or so, we HR Practitioners rolled out the Performance Plan to the leadership team, and then relentlessly chased them down to get their performance appraisals done on time. Then, after hearing months of griping from leaders and employees alike, we'd re-develop, re-design and then re-launch the 'new and improved' form, the more stream-lined process and we were sure we'd be met with enthusiastic cheers from all involved.

Inevitably, the process of chasing leaders and dodging complaints continued. No form, no annual process, no amount of encouraging, berating or rewarding leaders worked; performance time was the bane of our existence. We detested it as much as everyone else did (and does)!

Then, along came the [Neuroleadership Institute](#), and everything started to shift. Their research supports what many of us know is indeed the right thing to do: [Kill Your Performance Ratings](#). Not only are most organization's performance management systems cumbersome and incredibly time-consuming, they are often counter-productive. And, that's not even the worst of it. They do more harm than good. "In the context of neuroscience research, most PM practices turn out to damage the performance they are intended to improve. That's because they are based on a fundamental misunderstanding of human responses, as revealed in recurring patterns of mental activity."

Performance discussions, as they are traditionally formulated and administered, automatically put people in a threat state (also known as '[fight or flight](#)' response). Think about it, if someone says they'll be evaluating you, aren't you automatically feeling a little on the defensive? In fact, that notion alone - being evaluated or appraised - will likely be enough to distract you away from the performance itself and toward the instinct to protect yourself. When you are in a threat state, your goal is survival...not learning, not growing, not appreciating...just surviving. An entire organization focused on surviving is not one that breeds the collaborative cultures required for today's workplaces. Instead a 'kill or be killed' mentality permeates the organization. People move away from each other, rather than toward teaming and co-creation.

All sorts of media, including [CNN](#), are picking up on the idea of dismantling performance management as we know it. Not only is it completely demotivating for people, it is also a "colossal time-suck" for managers." So an increasing number of companies -- including Accenture, GE, Microsoft, CIGNA, The Gap and Deloitte -- have decided to overthrow

the annual review in favor of monthly, bi-weekly or even "on demand" conversations between managers and employees."

Human beings benefit far more from real-time, ongoing dialogue between managers and staff. Goals stay front of mind, appreciation is provided often, and possible 'issues' are addressed and re-directed promptly. Everybody wins.

Since people do better when dialogue is open, continuous and positive, why would we not have the key communication system about performance be that way as well?

<https://www.derilatimer.com/performance-appraisals-more-harm-than-help/>



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Creating cutting-edge educational experiences for organizations, Deri adds extra value with certification in emotional intelligence, psychometric assessment, and neuro-linguistic programming. A popular University Instructor, she has designed and delivered full-credit courses and seminars in Resilience, Positive Psychology, Team Building, and Leadership Development. Deri's client resources, including two books '*Wake Up To Your Habits*' and '*What's Your Story? You Decide*', and an APP called '*Mood Manager*', provide a rich resource of strategies and tools to shift your emotions, adjust your thinking, and positively impact your results.