



How do you evaluate the performance of those employees that you value and reward them for a job well done? In this article I'll outline a customizable program that you can adapt to describe, evaluate, record, and reward your staff.

Job Descriptions

Each employee should have clear knowledge of job expectations, company policies, and procedures. One of the best things you can do for your staff is to provide job descriptions for each position. If you have never taken the time to do this, don't worry. This can be an exercise for your staff to virtually complete on their own and bring about a better awareness and insight of your expectations.

Job Evaluations

First of all, you must create an evaluation that will be used with consistency. I communicate regularly with the people in my company, interviewing and gathering their opinions, and finding out what is important to them. I do believe, if given the chance, employees will provide you with valuable information about what keeps *them* motivated, including their expectations of their co-workers' standards. Fundamental positions for typical survey offices are listed below, along with evaluation essentials:

Field

This group has changed the most in the past couple of decades. If your company uses robotics or GPS equipment, you no longer have Rodman or Instrument Man positions. Instead, you probably have Crew/Party Leader/Chief, Field

Creating Employee Portfolios

A Guide to Evaluating and Rewarding your Staff

Member, and/or Survey Technician (Floater). Depending upon your equipment, one-person crews are becoming status-quo in the field. Of course we can say that it's almost always more cost-effective to buy new and faster equipment than it is to employee humans.

Our Crew Chiefs came up with five "essentials" to help evaluate employee performance:

Entry Level Field

1. Wear appropriate clothing for the weather and terrain. (Work boots are appropriate, not sneakers or tennis shoes.) Wear clothes that can get dirty, make sure they are clean at the start of the work day.
2. Learn and be able to explain, in simple terms, basic surveying terminology.

3. Be punctual and dependable. No excused absences for the first three months. Leave personal cell phone in truck to avoid distractions. Comply with crew chief.
4. Write legibly and spell words correctly.
5. Use tools correctly, and efficiently, such as an engineer's measuring tape; use a straight edge, template, or protractor to draw legible sketches; apply uniform handwriting on stakes; tie flagging around stakes; use cutting tools safely.

Instrument Person

This person can do everything an Entry Level person can do, plus:

1. Undertake tasks assigned by the Crew Chief in a timely, efficient manner. (A response such as "It's not my job," is not acceptable.)

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2. Make sure the truck is completely loaded, batteries are charged batteries, and redundant tools are available, if necessary.
3. Alert office personnel of instrument or tool mishaps immediately.
4. Safely and correctly set up any instrument within two minutes.
5. Learn how to properly take field notes and/or collect data electronically.

It has been our experience that if CAD folks ask to see the instrument person often for explanations, it's a good indication he or she needs more training.

As the manager, I feel the following qualities are most important when it comes to the Crew Chief and/or Survey Technician:

This person can do everything an Instrument Person can do, plus:

1. Successfully manage and lead a field crew, and interact professionally with clients.
2. Work independently and know where to find answers.
3. Demonstrate effective time management skills, while focusing on quality work.
4. Perform any technical elements of the job.
5. Implement a system of checks in place to catch mistakes, omissions, errors. Once again, if the CAD folks or the LSs ask to see this person often for explanations, it's a good indication they need more training.

Office

This group includes Administrative, Project Managers, CAD Technicians, Researchers, Field Coordinator, Survey Dept. Head, LSs and more. For the purposes of this article, we will limit the discussion to CAD and Administrative people.

Entry Level CAD Technician

1. Set up drawings according to company standards.
2. Competently use and apply surveying terminology.
3. Be able to produce an 8 1/2 x 11 simple boundary in three hours within a week of CAD employment with few 'mark-ups'.
4. Demonstrate understanding of notes and sketches.
5. Be familiar with the basics of CAD software and other common office software, such as MS Office, Adobe, etc.

CAD Technician

1. Create, edit and produce topographic surveys.
2. Calculate volumes, areas, mapchecks, and understand layer management.
3. Produce an 8 1/2 x 11 simple boundary in 1-1.5 hours within a week of CAD employment with few 'mark-ups'.
4. Conduct online research, in-house research, read plans, read and write legal descriptions.
5. Demonstrate knowledgeable of local regulations and requirements

Administrative

Although this may be the easiest group to evaluate, it is often the least appreciated, since these employees are not traditionally billable. However, the power of a good office manager can make or break your bottom line, meaning your cash flow and profit. Your annual gross can actually increase without increasing your personnel or job intake. The ratios below represent years of consistent, realistic and obtainable goals concerning accounts receivable and invoicing. Here are three easy factors you and your admin people can use to check and evaluate their performance.

■ *Weekly Aging Accounts Receivables Report*

The total should never be more than 10% of your estimated Gross Sales. If it's less, this person might be due a bonus or at least a good pat on the back. If it's more, then you need to review your payment and collection policies. Also, your AR person might not have that 'the assertiveness without aggressiveness' character sometimes needed to extract money out of clients. More training is needed or consider someone with collections experience.

■ *Weekly Unbilled Time Report*

The total of unbilled time should never be more than 5% of your estimated Gross Sales. If it's more, this person is not getting the invoices out in a timely manner or your project managers are not following through with completing their projects. Every Friday morning we go over any lingering accounts, and get those invoices out that day.

■ *Surveying Economics*

Always do comparison shopping

even if you buy from the same vendor, and check prices annually for such things as E&O Insurance, Health Insurance, all other insurance policies, telephone and internet service, etc.

Employee Portfolios

Portfolios contain a collection of work that is graphic in nature. Employers should maintain portfolios for each permanent employee, particularly those in surveying and mapping. They should contain samples of specific tasks that were to be completed within a certain period of time, with an indication of the number of times a task was performed with or without supervision for each position offered in the company. As an incentive to the employee, employees that leave their companies on good terms should receive their portfolios as a final acknowledgment of a job well done. This can help them when applying for licensure.

Rewards and Incentives

Surveyors continue to compete against the building, engineering and computer/information technology (IT) industries for the same analytical brainpower. If we want to attract, keep and maintain the best and brightest, then we need to consider what incentives and rewards can be offered to our staffs in exchange for a job well done.

Need help getting started? Go to www.SurveyingZone.com to download Job Descriptions, Employee Evaluations, Employee Portfolios, Rewards and Incentives that you can easily edit and customize for your staff. 

Acknowledgment

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