

## The Staff Appraisal Process

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### CCA Standard© User Groups

Since the launch of the CCA Standard© in 2001, over 100 contact centres have successfully achieved CCA accreditation. At the end of 2004, it was agreed that the knowledge and experience garnered by these accredited organisations would benefit being shared by the group and within the broader circles of CCA members. CCA has established several working groups to examine specific topics known to be of importance within contact centres, to learn how to overcome problems, and to establish how best practice can be implemented in line with the ethos of the CCA Standard© of continuous improvement.

Based on a presentation given by Natalie Mulaghton of Lloyds TSB and Laura Harold of National Australia Group, this white paper outlines the key findings of the **Performance Management User Group** relating to the staff appraisal process.

CCA would like to thank the following additional individuals and their organisations for their input to discussions on this topic. As organisations that have demonstrated best practice in their own contact centres, their contribution to the development of these specific guidelines is greatly valued.

- Ian McKinnon – West Bromwich Building Society
  - Theresa Wood – British Gas
  - Gill Jones – Telereal
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### Introduction

Staff appraisals form part of the performance management process and are implemented by all accredited group members. The frequency of reviews and actual targets and objectives set vary between group members, but all include a mix of both qualitative and quantitative elements. Most group members link appraisals to performance-related pay and bonus schemes, although making these payments on different timescales (some quarterly, others annual).

### Introducing an Appraisal System into the Organisation

- All staff must be fully briefed on the process, and how they will be involved - whether they are being appraised, conducting appraisals, or both.
- Individuals can often find it difficult, in the early stages of a new scheme, to know how to gather evidence to support their target and objective achievements. They are not used to being proactive in this way and tend to play down achievements in the workplace. Encouraging individuals to build an evidence folder can help to overcome this. Staff need to be totally clear on the criteria for the appraisal in order that they can record relevant information over a period of time.
- Those conducting appraisals must be trained to carry them out and therefore this should be included in Team Leader and Management development training.
- In practice, appraisals undertaken by accredited group members are performed by management, from Team Leader upwards as appropriate. Once an appraisal had been undertaken and agreed with the appraised, it is common for the next line manager to review and sign off.

### Undertaking Appraisals - Some Tips

- It is important to individualise the appraisals as staff take these very seriously.
  - The appraisal process must always be seen to be fairly managed and objective, especially when the outcome has an effect on performance related pay or bonuses. Otherwise, it can become very emotive.
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- Remember that while you may consider these appraisals to be confidential, there will always be discussion on individual outcomes amongst the peer group.
- In practice, the majority of individuals fall into the mid-way band for any assessment. It is useful for a central management team to review any individuals who do not fall into this band - whether above or below - to validate the grading. The appraising manager must provide evidence to support the grading allocated.
- Targets and objectives tend to focus on individual achievement, but in some instances team targets may be included. Care needs to be given to including team targets as this can cause problems if there are team members who are not performing to the required standard.
- A 'Balanced Scorecard' approach may be taken to the performance criteria set, with a range of measures contributing to the overall scoring. Some examples in place with group members are:
  - Quality performance measures
  - Sales conversion
  - Short-term sickness/attendance
  - Number of calls taken
  - Suggestions made to improve centre performance
  - Corporate involvement
  - Compliments
  - Complaints
  - Staff perception surveys (Team Leader up)

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### Further Information

For further information on this topic, or for more details regarding the CCA Standard<sup>®</sup> User Groups, please contact Judy Smyth, CCA Best Practice Specialist, at [judy.smyth@cca.org.uk](mailto:judy.smyth@cca.org.uk)