

# Beyond the Horizons Consulting

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## Therapy for Business®

Have you ever wondered why some organizations function so well, while others seem to have nothing but logjams? — Leaders need to have vision which they communicate clearly to their employees. Leaders also need to engage their workers emotionally in the tasks at hand. Sometimes an organization needs a little therapy!

**Our May Newsletter continues our examination of objectivity in employee ratings and then offers you an example of a behaviorally anchored rating scale. Our May article begins on page 2 of the Newsletter.**

Beyond the Horizons Consulting offers a variety of



services for individuals, teams, and organizations.

- ◆ Individual coaching for managers is a process that begins by identifying your style, what you want to retain and strengthen, and what you want to modify. Objective assessments are part of the process, as are also a mutual give-and-take process of creative problem solving and supportive guidance.
- ◆ We offer group seminars on identifying and dealing with stress in a relaxing and supportive environment.

- ◆ Our team building seminars will help your team or department run more smoothly, whether it is a brand-new team or one that has been put together after a reorganization.
- ◆ Our communication seminars identify crucial parts of the communication equation and help you put them all together by using role play, among other practical, hands-on experiences.
- ◆ Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) is a special tool we are equipped to provide to your business whenever there is a traumatic incident — death of a coworker, robbery, layoffs, etc. — in the workplace.
- ◆ We also offer group seminars utilizing excellent tools, including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or the DISC, to help you see *in black-and-white* differences in personality type and behavior.
- ◆ Our conflict resolution services help opposing parties identify mutual purpose(s) and restore harmony to the workplace.
- ◆ It is our pleasure to tailor a seminar to your company's, department's, or team's needs!

Our serene, off-site location appears featured in our May and June 2005 Newsletters.

**Call us to schedule a complimentary consultation for yourself or your business!**

**Our helpful Office Administrator, Stan, will work with you to schedule a meeting time that fits your schedule.**

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## How to Choose an Objective Rater

Last month we noted that a manager may need to combat a tendency to overrate his/her direct reports and create a halo effect throughout his evaluations.

Here are some other factors to consider. Raters may feel that a superior appraisal is *needed* to guarantee a raise, promotion, or bonus. In fact, other factors come into play, including the existence of cost-of-living raises, the relative performance level of similar workers in other divisions, and the reality of high turnover costs. If an employee is performing at an acceptable level, it may make good economic sense to retain that person and hone his/her skills rather than to bypass him/her and thwart progress in career development. The question to ask is,

“Do I believe that this appraisal is the only factor in determining the rewards this employee will reap from a good performance record?”

Second, raters themselves need to know what may be the results of their appraisal activities. Here are some questions to ask:

- 1 Is there a one-to-one relationship between performance appraisal and reward?
- 2 Conversely, is there no relationship between these two variables?
- 3 Do poor performance appraisals result in sanctions against the employee, or are they merely overlooked?

A fourth area pertaining to those who rate employees on performance appraisals has to do with the training of raters. This is obviously a very important job and an aspect of management which often does not receive much notice. Raters need to be aware of the “halo effect,” the tendency to rate employees around an average or a mean performance standard, and the “psychology of leniency” toward one’s proteges. To aid managers in fair, objective rating procedures, a good discipline is to have them review scenarios with encapsulate excellent, good, fair, and poor performance over a spectrum of job duties. These can be given in written format or presented in a video, with ample time between scenarios for participants to rate each episode and then discuss it with other managers participating in the group experience. The question to ask here is

What kind of training have I (or have our managers) received in rating employees on a performance appraisal instrument?

## AN EXAMPLE OF A BEHAVIORALLY ANCHORED RATING SCALE FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

This rating scale would be used after a supervisor has observed a call center representative respond to one or a number of phone calls.

10 (very high)

Greets customers enthusiastically with an attitude of wanting to be of service.

8 - 9 (high)



Answers all customer questions accurately.

Asks for feedback from customer, “Have I answered all your questions?”

6 - 7 (moderately high)

Sets appropriate boundaries in polite way; does not allow customer to verbally abuse him/her.

Uses phone etiquette with “difficult” customers, “It sounds like you’re frustrated with ...”

4 - 5 (low-moderate)

Provides some answers, refers to supervisor for others.

2 - 3 (low)

Uses phrases such as, “I can’t understand what you want. It doesn’t make sense.”

Refuses to answer some questions. Instead diverts customer, “That’s not what is *really* important to know.”

1 (very low)

Talks back to customer, “You don’t know what you’re talking about!”

Next month we continue our discussion of performance appraisal by implementing an *action plan*.