

### 2.3 Exercise 4

Hello everyone. Today I'd like to talk to you about something that every employee seems to fear more than anything in the world ... performance appraisals. But a performance appraisal doesn't have to be a painful experience. With a little preparation, it can be a powerful tool to help you achieve both personal and career success.

If you are receiving regular feedback, a performance appraisal is nothing more than a confirmation of what you already know. But because many companies link them to an employee's salary, training, promotion and other rewards, performance appraisals play a critical role in your career development and you must be well prepared. Following these steps should make it easier:

- Know when it is time for your appraisal. No matter how frequently your employer conducts your appraisals, you must be prepared well before the actual date of the meeting.
- Conduct a self-review. This is an opportunity for you to think honestly about your personal strengths and weaknesses. You will probably find achievements to be proud of as well as new opportunities to improve your performance. A good self-review can give you clarity and help you to approach your appraisal meeting with confidence.
- Review and refine your current job description. An employee's duties and responsibilities often change over time. Be aware of your main duties, make sure that your work is on target, and identify the measurable results. Remind your manager of your accomplishments by giving concrete examples. This is very important, since it is likely that you will be judged by what you have achieved. Updating your job description from time to time will help ensure a fair evaluation.
- Recognise your developmental needs. Perhaps you need more computer training, product knowledge or leadership skills. If this is the case, you should ask your manager what support or training is available to help you grow in this area.

And this ties in with my final, and perhaps most important point:

- Keep in mind that a performance appraisal is not something that is done to you, and in which you are merely a passive 'victim'. Take charge and be an active participant in the process. It is just as important to give feedback as it is to receive it. Be prepared to provide your manager with information on how he or she might be able to further enhance your career.

If you prepare well, you can change your appraisal from a dreaded occasion into a demonstration of your dedication to your career, your company, your boss, and your own continued self-improvement. Good luck!