



Get Rid of the Performance Review!: How Companies Can Stop Intimidating, Start Managing--and Focus on What Really Matters

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The performance review. It is one of the most insidious, most damaging, and yet most ubiquitous of corporate activities. We all hate it. And yet nobody does anything about it. Until now... Straight-talking Sam Culbert, management guru and UCLA professor, minces no words as he puts managers on notice that -- with the performance review as their weapon of choice -- they have built a corporate culture based on intimidation and fear. Teaming up with Wall Street Journal Senior Editor Lawrence Rout, he shows us why performance reviews are bogus and how they undermine both creativity and productivity. And he puts a good deal of the blame squarely on human resources professionals, who perpetuate the very practice that they should be trying to eliminate. But Culbert does more than merely tear down. He also offers a substitute -- the performance preview -- that will actually accomplish the tasks that performance reviews were supposed to, but never will: holding people accountable for their actions and their results, and giving managers and their employees the kind of feedback they need for improving their skills and to give the company more of what it needs. With passion, humor, and a rare insight into what motivates all of us to do our best, Culbert offers all of us a chance to be better managers, better employees and, indeed, better people. Culbert has long said his goal is to make the world of work fit for human consumption. "Get Rid of the Performance Review!" shows us how to do just that.

Get Rid of the Performance Review!: How Companies Can Stop Intimidating, Start Managing--and Focus on What Really Matters Details

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Ilb4kids says

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I really want to read Beyond Bullsh*t: Straight-Talk at Work, but this is not available in the library, so I read this one instead to get familiar his work, so I can borrow this later.

Nathalie Karasek says

Don't do reviews, do previews instead.... that's what the book is about

Online Eccentric Librarian says

More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>

The book is interesting and certainly author Culbert is very passionate about the subject. At times, that passion can translate into a bit of belligerence when, really, if you have bought the book he's likely already convinced you by the first page. As with most of these types of HR books, the author seems to stretch the topic as far as possible (it might have sufficed as a white paper!) and there is a lot of rhetoric and then a few examples. I'm always interested in practice rather than theory but I had no doubt that Culbert knew the subject well and had some great ideas in there for better HR evaluation and incentive practices.

In almost 15 years in HR I've seen many different performance evaluation situations:

- ranging from 1 page to 5 pages
- some that require extensive written feedback, some that require almost none
- evaluations that have all the text auto-entered for the manager when they click on a rating level in each category
- I've had managers who deliver reviews in person/on phone to all of their employees and managers who only put it in writing and send it to the employee (despite guidelines to verbally deliver)
- I've had managers who answer phone calls during the performance evaluation discussion with their employee.
- evaluations that say illegal or inappropriate things, like "because she was on medical leave for four months, I didn't promote her."
- employees who visit my office to say their manager just gave them a bad review and it's the first they've ever heard that there was a problem
- evaluations that speak glowingly of employees, then two months later the manager comes to you and says they've had it and the employee must be fired immediately

- My own manager in HR invited me out to lunch to deliver my review. Does ANYONE want to eat while getting their evaluation, even if it's all good?

So yes, there are a lot of problems out there with performance reviews. However, if you do it RIGHT, you don't have the problems above. Have the right tool (online peer evaluation for example) and train your managers well, and performance evaluations will serve all the purposes they should.

John Stepper says

It reads like a rant, and I wish there was more data and references, but it makes a powerful conceptual argument: the annual performance review is harmful to the firm and its employees. We need to eliminate it.

Teechbiz says

I'm so excited. We've recently changed how performance reviews are conducted where I work and many people are upset with the change. I'm going to check this book out and perhaps slip it under the nose of my boss

Janet McNichol says

The author clearly hates people working in the HR function and comes across as pompous. I think he could have made his point in a fraction of the pages he took. He offered little on how to prepare managers to hold the performance preview discussions he recommended. I was hoping for some insights into how organizations that move away from performance reviews handle compensation and all he offered was a naive anecdote about his house keeper. Disappointing.

Jennifer says

A quick read, with a funny, hard edge.

I agree that there must be a better way to handle performance reviews, and I would be more than happy to drop them entirely - and I think that his proposal of a performance preview is worthy of exploration. in my 5 years as a manager, I don't think the performance review has ever changed any of my team's actual work. I don't think they're objective, and I don't think they are a great management tool.

Unfortunately, the author offers absolutely no hard statistics or facts to back up his claim that removing performance reviews will improve staff morale and performance - which makes it a bit tough to take it to your supervisors for discussion . . . More hard data is needed, rather than just anecdotes.

Katharine Grubb says

Great, inspiring! Would love to start using the skills offered by Culbert in the workplace. Would also like a follow-up book with tales from people who have tried to put these ideas into practice at their workplaces. What resistance did they face? How did they pitch the idea to the big boss? Oh, and he's really hard on HR people, which was irritating, but worthwhile to keep reading- I tried to keep an open mind. Pleased.

David Wen says

Great idea and his argument is valid especially seeing first hand how the performance review is always a BS exercise required by HR. What he really recommends is a culture change which is very hard to achieve without some sponsorship from the executive level. All in all, the ideas are good but probably could've been presented in a much shorter format.

Don says

In the interest of full disclosure I am a human resources professional with a long successful career that has included three employers: a large manufacturer (private sector), a large public university and currently a very highly rated non-profit. After reading the first half of this book I felt battered and bruised; like a combination of Hitler, Mussolini, and Col. Klink. Instead of "shooting the messenger," this book, a majority of the time, has the messenger shooting the audience. Alienating a large part of the audience that would read this book would not seem to further his cause.

Of all the HR professionals I know, maybe one fits Culbert's opinion. In my experience HR people hate the performance review process as much as anyone. Culbert states "I wrote it because I believe - no, I know - that there are many bosses who would like to change that game, but they feel handcuffed by the rules already in play." HR professionals I know feel the same way. Upper management demands that HR do the reviews as part of their reason for being instead of allowing HR to focus on leadership and development, in my opinion.

Written with sensation to elicit interest, the book spends much more time proofing what's wrong with the system. That's fine, I agree. But, there is not enough time spent on the performance previews, their value and how to successfully implement. And I do think there is value there.

My current employer encourages servant leadership and professional/personal development. We are looking to abolish the performance review. I am still researching and have many articles, papers and books to read in order to make a recommendation.

My rating is low due to the ranting and because the valuable content was overlooked in part in favor of proving what everyone already knows.

Jen says

I agree with the underlying premise of the book, and enjoyed his writing style. I didn't agree with every aspect of his solutions, but I do feel there's a lot of useful information here- I would tweak some of his

questions and methodologies in my program. And I admit I was a wee but offended of his harsh view of HR professionals. I believe it reduces one's credibility when one lumps all of a certain category into a sweeping negative generalization. But that could just be me feeling picked on.

Zoddes says

I got this book in a Goodreads giveaway... and I tried so hard to read it. I work for a large corporation obsessed with the Performance Review. I hate it. I was really hoping for a comprehensive analysis of what is wrong with the system and how to fix it - something I could pass along up the corporate food chain to make this nightmare go away. But even with a personal investment, I couldn't make it through this book. In addition to being overly repetitive, this book was written by the most bitter man in the world. Considering how badly I've been screwed over by the performance review, I didn't think anyone could be more bitter than me. I was wrong.

If the content could be boiled down (lose the repetition, evaporate the bitterness), this would probably be a cool book. There is definitely a problem with the performance review, but this book is not the solution.

Kelly says

I received this book as a giveaway with the first reads program.

As a manager, I try to look out for books that explore creative out of the box techniques to approach team work and managing. I thought the theory behind the book was an interesting one and I do believe that some of the approaches and discussion questions would lead to a more genuine conversation between staff members. For me, the book was not totally applicable as it focused more towards the large corporate environment. I would recommend the book to others, even if just a way to start thinking more outside of the accepted mainstream way of doing business.

Christina says

I completely agree with Culbert that HR has taken over and stifles productivity within many corporations. I see this in my own company where HR dictates when employees are eligible for promotions, makes it extremely difficult for managers to let go of employees that are clearly not performing and puts up barriers to transfers and external hires that make good business sense. One of my favorite parts of the book is when the author breaks down the 360 review. Although it is not a requirement within my company, it is often pointed to as an indication of a commitment to personal development. I had always been on the fence about doing a company 360 assessment, but after considering the points in this book I am very glad that I haven't. I think that this is a worthwhile read for any professional.

Bob Reed says

As a person responsible for 15 reviews per year I can see the merits of this book. The book really explains the need to change our outlook on managing people and start team building. The first few chapters seem to be somewhat repetitive, but I assume the authors were trying to make a point. Well worth reading if you have

to reiew others.
