



MELROSE



**THE APPRAISAL
INTERVIEW**
NEW VERSION

course guide



THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

course guide

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February 1995



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USING THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

There are three main elements to this pack

▶ **The trainer's pack**

This contains all the materials and help you need to run a one day course for a group of between eight and twelve people. It consists of:

- A copy of **The appraisal interview** video which includes summaries by both the appraiser, Paul, and the appraisee, Tony
- This course guide

▶ **The quick guide**

This is designed to be used with the video when time for preparation and training is limited. The programme it outlines can be run by someone with little or no training, experience or used as the basis for discussion by a group of colleagues working together.

▶ **The appraisee's self-study pack**

This is designed for use by individuals who are preparing to be interviewed by their manager. It consists of:

- A copy of **The appraisal interview** video which contains a brief introduction to the main film to focus the viewer's attention on the questions it raises for appraisees. This version of the video also includes the summary by Tony, the appraisee.
- A short self-study booklet

If you are a line manager and you wish to give the self study pack to those you will be appraising to help them prepare more effectively, read handout 5 in this guide. It will tell you how to introduce the pack to your people.



APPRAISAL - THE CONTEXT

Introduction

The appraisal interview is a training resource pack which examines the skills we all need to discuss performance effectively with one another. If we don't have these skills then, no matter what kind of organisation we are in or what type of system we use, appraisal won't work for us. So skills are fundamental. But skillful appraisers alone will not necessarily make appraisal work. To set this training programme in context, let us take a brief look at what else is needed to get real benefits from appraisal systems.

Purpose

Like everything else in management, appraisal needs a clear aim. So, first of all, we must decide what these systems are for. Broadly speaking, there are two choices: a system which is about assessment, comparisons between individuals, ratings and direct links to reward, and one which is about improvement, development and motivation. Each purpose can be achieved in certain circumstances, but appraisal systems cannot deliver both at once. Discussing improvements means being open with one another. It is unrealistic (and unfair) to expect individuals to be open about their weaknesses, or to tell the boss that he is failing to give them the support they need, when they know that next year's pay rise will depend on the rating he gives them at the end of the interview.

Ownership

Then there is the familiar question of ownership. If bosses and job holders think that appraisal is valuable it will



work. If they don't, it won't. So sensible organisations get as much involvement as they can in the design of their systems from those who will have to put them into action.

Once an appraisal system is running, it needs support. People need to be trained. Practical difficulties have to be spotted and sorted out. Appraisers need protection, so that they can devote the time to appraisal needed to get it right. Perhaps most of all, the organisation must be seen to deliver on the conclusions that people reach at appraisal interviews. To take a common example, there are few things more demoralising than agreeing training or development with one of your people and then finding that you cannot get the support required to provide it.

Adapting to change

Finally, as thoughtful organisations adapt to change, so they adapt their appraisal systems accordingly. The pressures on organisations - public as well as private - to become more focused about what they do is causing many of them to tie their appraisal systems much more tightly into their broad strategy. No longer is appraisal being treated as something which the Personnel Department dreams up and imposes on managers. Instead, it is increasingly seen as part of a much wider approach to Performance Management - linked into effective business planning, a clear organisational vision, appropriate reward systems, a communication strategy and so on. This is really good news because the more those who have to make appraisal work see it as being in the mainstream of their jobs, the more seriously they will take it and the more benefits it will deliver to them.

Change is also forcing organisations to look at their structures and how they use, the talents of those they employ. The ranks of management are thinning. Layers



are disappearing from hierarchies. The increasing use of task groups and project teams is making organisations more flexible and quicker on their feet. People at the sharp end of organisations, who in the past were sometimes told to leave their brains at home when they came to work, are now being empowered to accept responsibility and take decisions.

What does all this imply for appraisal? Well, several things. It means:

- Learning how to discuss performance amongst groups of people who are different from those we are used to. Professional people - research scientists, doctors, teachers - often take a view of their work and their place in organisations which is quite unfamiliar to traditional managers
- Finding different ways of looking at performance for different groups - standards or competences, rather than objectives perhaps
- Working out how to appraise teams
- Deciding how to appraise people who have more than one boss
- Solving the problem created by having managers with large numbers of people nominally responsible to them. These issues are going to make unfamiliar approaches to appraisal much more common. Look for:
 - More self appraisal, both by individuals and by teams
 - More upward appraisal. If organisations really mean it when they say that a manager's job is to support those who are one step nearer to their clients, then the best people to appraise that support will be those who are receiving it
- Peer review. This is an approach familiar to professional people, such as scientists, university teaching staff



and hospital consultants. It may, in future, have a part to play within empowered, self-managing teams.

- Shared appraisal - getting views about performance from more than one source

Above all, expect change to create variety in how we appraise. One system will not fit everybody and the days of trying to feed people through the same sausage machine are fast coming to an end. Universal systems are dead, even if some of them seem reluctant to lie down. There is a very important message in that word 'variety' for those organisations, in education and healthcare for example, which are new to appraisal. Find your own solutions. Those who adopt other organisations' approaches uncritically run the risk of dressing themselves in clothes which others are trying to take off. Let us go back to where we started. Of course we have to get the context right; have clear objectives; design and support appraisal properly; understand the implications of change and adapt appraisal to fit; create the right sort of variety in the systems we adopt. But never forget the need for basic skills. When you come down to it, appraisal is about two adults sitting down to discuss performance at work. Do that right and the benefits are immense.



CONTENTS OF THE PACK.

Video

▶ **The appraisal interview (30 mins)**

The story of an appraisal interview which goes wrong the first time around and then, after a bit of help from the appraiser's boss, is put right at the second attempt. The video is divided into three parts, each ten minutes long.

▶ **Summary (7 mins)**

Appraiser and appraisee in turn summarise what they have learned from the two interviews.

Course guide

▶ **About the pack**

This gives an overview of the contents of the pack and guidance on how to run a one day course. It consists of: An introduction which outlines the purpose of the pack, the intended audience and the objectives of the training course it contains:

- A synopsis of the video
- Key messages from the video
- A timetable and session by session outline of a one day training course
- Guidance on how to prepare and follow up the one day course
- A list of other Melrose titles relevant to appraisal

▶ **Course session plan**

Detailed instructions for the one day course.

▶ **Resources**

Handouts and presentation 'slides'/OHPs



PURPOSE OF THE PACK

Introduction

The purpose of this training pack is to help you equip those involved in appraisal with the skills necessary to conduct and take part in effective appraisal interviews.

Audience

The target group for the training outlined in the pack consists of all those who take part in appraisal interviews. Though there is more emphasis in the video on the role of the appraiser, the skills covered are just as applicable to those on the receiving end of appraisal. An appraisal interview is much more likely to be a genuine, helpful exchange of information and ideas if both parties understand how to prepare, structure and follow up their discussion and know how to behave during it.

The course is designed for a group of between six and twelve participants. Below six you will tend to lose much of the interaction which brings a course like this to life. Above twelve the numbers become too large for one trainer to handle, particularly when it comes to running exercises and role-plays and providing feedback.

It is often an advantage to involve people from different levels in the organisation's hierarchy in training courses on appraisal, since this reinforces the messages from the video about the two-way nature of good appraisal interviews and the dangers which can arise from the different perceptions of appraiser and appraisee.

Although you can certainly mix participants from different functions on these courses, try to avoid having lone individuals. The programme will be much more effective if you have at least two or three from each function represented.



The one day course has been designed and written on the assumption that you have some experience of running skills based training events involving exercises and role-plays. The quick guide provides a simpler, shorter session which can be run by managers with little or no training experience.

Objectives

Those taking part in the one day course will:

- Learn how to prepare for an effective appraisal interview
- Recognise and be able to create the right structure for their appraisal discussions
- Learn how to use appropriate behaviours at appraisal interviews, particularly those of listening, questioning and influencing, and improve their ability to put these skills to work by taking part in exercises and role-plays
- Understand how to get the content of appraisal interviews right
- Recognise the importance of following up appraisal interviews



COURSE TIMETABLE

Here is the timetable for the one day event. Please read the comments in the section on *Preparation and follow up on* page 16 about the role-playing session, since the type and number of role-plays you choose to do will affect the overall timescale significantly.

Introduction	15 mins
Preparation	60 mins
The interview I: Structure	45 mins
The interview II: Listening, questioning and body language	75 mins
The interview III: Influencing skills	40 mins
The interview IV: Content and follow up	40 mins
Role-plays	120 mins
Course review	25 mins
TOTAL	7 hours
