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## Smart Strategies

### Solutions for Workplace Challenges

Issue #10-1  
January 2010

Dear Alan,

Wow! It's been awhile. I got very distracted in the fall and missed several deadlines. My new year's resolution is to publish this newsletter periodically, not monthly, so I won't miss any more deadlines! ;-)

I *will* try to get it out more regularly, but I've got several busy months coming up... so we'll see.

In the fall I promised we'd tackle performance evaluations, so a little late, but hopefully better late than never, here it is.

Hope you enjoy!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alan'.

Alan Krieger

*Feel free to forward this to friends and colleagues.*

## Performance Evaluations - The Theory

The theory:

Performance evaluations are designed to improve employee's performance by increasing accountability. If done well, they further increase performance by increasing communication and morale/motivation, and by clarifying expectations.

Many people question how performance evaluations can improve motivation when most people hate giving or receiving them. It often ranks right up



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### In This Issue

#### Understanding and Managing Stress

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### For Laughs

Proofreading is a dying art. I hope you don't catch me making these bloopers! Here are some headlines from

there with going to the dentist.

Here's my take on how the theory can work.

A. Performance evaluations "done well" mean that:

1. The performance expectations are written in specific, measurable terms and focus on behavior, not skills, knowledge or attitude. (more on this in the next issue). Ideally the employee should be actively involved in developing these expectations.
2. The performance expectations are finalized and given to the employee at the start of the evaluation period and if the employee was not involved in developing them, s/he is given a chance to read and think about them and talk with the supervisor to clarify exactly what they mean (specific).
3. The supervisor and employee have regular feedback sessions throughout the year, so the employee knows exactly where s/he stands in terms of how well the supervisor feels the performance matches expectations.
4. Where the employee misses the mark, the supervisor takes time to coach/mentor/train the employee to help them improve performance.
5. Where the employee does well, the supervisor recognizes this and lets the employee know. Ideally some additional reward is offered - interesting assignment, good parking spot, raise or bonus, etc.

B. How it's motivational:

1. People are anxious if they don't fully understand what the boss expects of them. Anxiety reduces motivation to excel.
2. People feel good about the work place when they feel they are doing well on the job and

newspapers. Someone was busy texting and not thinking!

## Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says

*Really? This is news?*

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## Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers

*That's taking things a bit far!*

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## Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over

*That's taking things way too far!*

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## Miners Refuse to Work after Death

*Some people are really lazy!*

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## Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant

*That's one way to cut prison costs!*

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## Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half

*Seems like an excessive punishment!*

are recognized for it.

3. People feel good about the work place and the supervisor when they are getting assistance to do a better job (improving skills or knowledge leads to more positive attitude which drives performance).
4. People appreciate getting attention from the boss on a regular basis (but not micro-management).

As always, I welcome your feedback and suggestions. Write to me at [alan@krsol.com](mailto:alan@krsol.com)

## What Our Readers Said About Performance Evaluation

Here's what people said in response to the survey I sent out last fall that asked two questions about performance evaluation:

1. In the perfect world, what do you see as the primary value of the performance evaluation process?
2. In your actual workplace (probably not the perfect world), what benefits, if any, have you seen from the performance evaluation process?

1. The primary value should be that it:

- helps employees align with organizational/unit goals
- encourages workers to do more of what they do well
- offers recognition / accolades for accomplishments
- suggests development / improvement opportunities
- suggests strategies for enhancing strengths
- formalizes conversations supervisors have with employees through the year
- sets deadlines for desired changes
- improves future performance

## About Krieger Solutions, LLC

We are a training and consulting company dedicated to helping people work together more effectively.

*We offer training, leadership coaching, facilitation, team building and organizational consulting services.*

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- is done VERY regularly (quarterly or after each major project)
- helps people move forward with their job/life

2. What actual benefits have you seen from performance evaluations?

We have seen improvements in employee/supervisor communication.

Gives every employee at least one opportunity to talk directly to his/her supervisor (due to shift work, some staff never see their manager otherwise).

Some managers do utilize the tool effectively for a discussion of needs and growth on both sides.

They are worthless as they appear on paper, but I hope the conversations were more meaningful.

We don't do development plans that are specific to the person.

I often learn thru performance evaluations what others are thinking of me - and it is sometimes a surprise. In a perfect world, it wouldn't be.

To be honest there aren't really any benefits where I work for performance evaluations

**My comments:**

The last comment is the one I hear most frequently. Supervisors and managers are missing a great opportunity if they don't do a good and focused job with performance evaluations.

The key is to start with a solid foundation - performance expectations that are specific, objective and behavioral; and follow this with regular feedback sessions.

You'll be amazed at how easy it gets and how powerful it can be!

Let me know if you have any success in this area or need any guidance on developing better performance expectations.

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**"Reprinted from 'Smart Strategies - Solutions to Workplace Challenges', a newsletter from Krieger Solutions, LLC.  
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**Thanks for subscribing  
and for any comments  
you send.**

*Alan*

## News From Krieger Solutions, LLC



We've had a busy winter so far. I've been working on several new workforce development projects. They bring me back to my jobs of many years ago - youth development - where I worked before starting my consultant business.

I'm working on developing a career resource to help students, parents and counselors better understand the high tech workplace that's coming to the Capital Region.

{{**News flash** for those of you who know college age students - they should seriously consider a two year technical degree - contact me for my rant on why four year schools are oversold.}}

I'm working on two other work force projects that will build better connections between the business community and the public/non-profit/educational sectors. They are also designed to facilitate the development of an effective high tech regional workforce.

## News From Krieger Solutions, LLC (cont.)

I'm also providing a four session leadership development series to the management team of an area hospital, hoping to reach 150-200 of their top managers by the time the series ends.

Please let me know if I can be of assistance to your organization.