



# 6 levels of appraisals

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# Development toward success

Significant changes in how business leaders work with **feedback** and **development** have occurred during the past few years. More and more of the organisations I work with have begun to recognize the connection between clear, relevant feedback, **employee development**, and the subsequent improvement of business results. Being transparent and open in **giving and receiving feedback**, with the aim to set clear expectations and support employees' development processes, is an important element in creating psychological safety. In return, an organisation that is able to establish a culture with psychological safety will experience a faster development process and **higher levels of motivation**.

In the past, annual appraisals, where employees received a performance review from management, were rarely likely to happen more than on a yearly basis - Luckily, that trend has changed. Today's agile organisations fully understand that true development and **constructive feedback** are vital to short-term and long-term excellence. In fact, I have seen clear movement towards monthly or even biweekly appraisal/feedback sessions that utilise annual surveys and more frequent short surveys to target key elements of the company strategy. This in combination with regular micro-feedback loops establishes a culture of **continuous development** clearly linked to the ambitions of the organisation. If people grow the business will grow.

## What league do you want to play in?

Sometimes I draw the parallel between a football team and a business team. What would happen if the top teams in the league stopped receiving continual feedback and only received feedback on their strengths and areas that need improvement once per year? What would their rate of progress be?

**Imagine that players are only given a yearly appraisal after which they play for a whole year before we sit down for feedback again.**

**Continuous feedback** being given before, during and after the game, as well as during training sessions is a well-established process for developing individuals and teams. What if we invested time and effort into providing our employees and colleagues with feedback in the same way top league football coaches do?

**For what league is your team designed? What would the return for your business be if your team developed to the next level?**

## SIX STAGES OF APPRAISAL AND FEEDBACK

I have tried to summarize some of my observations into 6 stages of ambition when it comes to making the connection between feedback, appraisal, and company success.

I have found that companies that have made this connection invest more time and effort into individual employees' development and have shifted feedback duties from HR to all company leaders. Integrating feedback to a normal procedure in the daily operation has in all cases I have seen so far lead to improved business results.

1

**No, or very limited, feedback. People are told when things go wrong, scapegoats are appointed.**

Employee surveys might be carried out, but not on a regular basis. Conflicts are dealt with only when they caused real problems.

2

**Feedback in yearly appraisals. People need to wait a year between the sessions.**

Appraisal is seen more as a box to tick rather than a real support tool to help the organisation to develop. Feedback in between is mainly limited to when things go wrong.

Yearly employee surveys are carried out with low contribution and people don't see the connection with implemented activities and the overall performance of the company

3

**Yearly appraisals are fully implemented and are seen as good and useful tool to support the development process. Feedback in-between is ad hoc, focusing on both reinforcing good behaviours and corrective feedback on non-productive situations and behaviours. Feedback is still seen as either negative or positive.**

Yearly employee surveys are carried out often with a demand to create follow-up activities on the low scores. Activity lists are made, and some follow-up activities carried out. Some parts of the organisation are successful in this process.

## SIX STAGES OF APPRAISAL AND FEEDBACK

4

**The yearly appraisals are fully implemented and are viewed positively as a useful tool to support the development process. There are now also quarterly follow-ups to support the development process. People are more curious to get feedback and there is an alignment between feedback, development, and regular follow-up.**

The yearly employee surveys have good participation scores, and people see the connection between the results, the strategy and the activities implemented.

5

**Appraisals are an important tool to align people with the company strategy and reinforce behaviours and productive procedures on a regular basis.**

Shorter monthly feedback sessions are carried out to encourage people, but also to correct less desirable behaviours before they have caused difficult conflicts.

Leaders are getting more feedback from (for example) 360 tools and development sessions, aligning leadership behaviours with strategy and the desired company culture.

People see feedback as a natural part of development and sometimes they refer to the term “feed forward”.

6

**Feedback is seen as an essential tool to keep people motivated and inspired to contribute to the company result and ensure a sustainable growth and company culture in line with strategy.**

It is as natural to give reinforcing feedback as well as corrective feedback to support people, their development and growth. The term feed-forward is commonly used.

Leadership and employee development activities are carried out on a continuous basis and are integrated into daily activities.

Each employee feels more responsible for their own development. Employee surveys, pulse tools and 360s are well integrated into strategy and seen an important tool when carried out in a timely and well-balanced way.

### Summary

The benefits of being at **stage 5 or 6** are huge, both for individuals working in the organisation and for the organisation itself.

Overall, psychological safety is higher, leading to a long list of benefits.

- **Motivation and engagement levels are higher.**
- **The engagement to reach company targets is higher and productivity levels are higher.**
- **Creativity is higher, as well as the capacity for dealing with complex issues.**
- **The employer brand is stronger and attracts more talented people.**
- **More teams in the organisation reach high performance levels.**
- **Stress levels are lower (negative stress) reducing sick leave.**

I hope this article can serve as a catalyst for you to start reflecting on where you are and what could be the next step for you and the organisation you work for.

Some questions to think about:

- **Where are you today with your organisation?**
- **What would be a desired next step for you?**
- **What do you see as a possible outcome?**
- **What could be the first step to take from here?**

If you want to continue your journey don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

An easy and first step to continue your own development journey is to **download our free app** and run one of our feedback surveys. You decide who and how many people you would like to get feedback from. Why not start with a self-assessment?

**To get ideas on development activities please visit our Academy section at: <https://www.insightsforyou.se/academy>**

**Good luck with this year's development journey!**