

5.4 Performance Appraisal

Performance Appraisal remains one of the areas with which employees are the most dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the Performance Appraisal system is now at its lowest level since the current round of employee surveys began in 1998. Satisfaction was 4.8 in 1998, rose to 4.9 in 2000, but has now dropped to 4.7. As in 2000, dissatisfaction is highest amongst FSs and COs at Headquarters. Satisfaction with the Performance Appraisal system is highest for EXs at Headquarters although even then only 42% indicated that they were satisfied. It remains less important however to overall employee satisfaction than Leadership, Communications or the Work Environment.

“Fix the promotion process and do away with the current appraisal form. It is hopelessly long and the Department wastes untold hours on it. Make the form short and snappy and provide a separate area for suggestions as to how an employee can improve his or her performance.”

Employees cite lack of timeliness when communicating performance appraisal objectives as the most significant contributing factor to the low satisfaction with the performance appraisal system. Although slightly over half (52%) of employees agreed that their performance objectives are communicated to them early in the appraisal year, a small proportion of employees (6%) disagreed strongly and in some cases reported that they have gone for almost two years without a discussion of their performance objectives. Rectifying this situation may depend on more frequent communications: 75% of employees agreed that regularly scheduled meetings would be an effective feedback mechanism.

Although not all employees were receiving their performance objectives in a timely manner, they did report that when received, their performance objectives are clear. Three-quarters of employees (75%) indicated that their individual performance objectives are clear, an increase of 15% from 2000.

Employees were also asked about a variety of different feedback systems. It was made clear that feedback systems should be independent from the promotion process. Support was highest for a feedback system similar to that used in the Public Service, with 82% of employees agreeing that they would like to see this established. Support was also high for a 360 degree feedback evaluation system, where anonymous feedback is provided by not only supervisors but also by clients, peers and subordinates – 78% of employees agreed this would be effective. While two-thirds of employees (67%) felt that a 180 degree upward feedback system, where anonymous feedback is provided by subordinates, would be effective, this was the least popular of any of the different feedback systems.