

Writing Performance Objectives

While performance components describe major areas of the employee's job, performance objectives describe the level of performance the employee is expected to achieve. There are three types of objectives. **Routine Objectives** are based on tasks the employee is expected to do on a day-to-day basis, while **Project Objectives** are based on specific assignment. By comparison, **Developmental Objectives** are chosen to prepare the employee for future positions and growth within the organization.

Properly written objectives:

- Allow employees to understand what is expected
- Enable the supervisor to more easily observe, document and coach
- Provide the employee with a means to self-evaluate
- Allow for an accurate comparison of "what was done" to "what was expected"

How to write Performance Objectives, Step-by-Step

1. Think about the team's and individual's mission.
 - What needs to get done-who needs to do it?
 - What are the developmental needs of the employee?
2. Think about the person (and position) the objective(s) will apply to.
 - Do you need additional information, i.e., position descriptions, appraisal forms, critical incident reports?
3. Think about a work component, (e.g., knowledge of work, leadership, etc.) and develop an applicable objective.
 - What does the objective address (a routine job function, a special project, developmental goal, or other)?
 - How applicable is the objective to the job component?
4. Why is the objective needed?
 - What results are needed and why?
5. Emphasize the needed results instead of the associated activity.
6. Think about ways of measuring the results.
 - How can you tell if the results have been achieved?
 - What is the measure of the results-Quality?
 - Quantity? Speed? Accuracy? Frequency? Etc.
7. Think about the timeframe in which the objective is to be accomplished, specifying deadlines, due dates, etc. as needed.
 - Break the plan down into short-term goals.
 - Plan a meeting schedule to discuss progress and encourage the employee.
8. Ask the employee what he or she thinks the objective means.
 - Rewrite the objective if there is any room for misinterpretation.

Achieving goals or objectives requires action. It requires the performance of some action, some sequence of steps, some behavior, some procedure or process, some task, duty or job. Developmental objectives are chosen to enhance an employee’s performance and prepare the employee for future positions and growth within the organization.

Properly written objectives:

- Allow employees to understand what is expected
- Enable supervisors to observe, document and coach
- Provide employees with a means of self-evaluation
- Allow for the comparison of “what was done” to “what was expected”

Many supervisors use **SMART** criteria to develop their objectives:

Specific means that an observable action, behavior or achievement is described. The objective should be specific about the result and describe what the individual will be able to do when the objective is achieved.

- What exactly is the employee expected to do?
- Is the outcome clear?

Measurable means that a method or procedure must exist to assess and document the quality of the outcome.

- What measurement will indicate the employee has successfully completed, or continues to meet the objective?
- Can these measurements be obtained?

Attainable means the objective must be realistic. The best objectives require the employee to stretch but aren’t extreme.

- Has anyone else been successful doing this?
- Can the employee accomplish the objective in the given timeframe with the available resources?

Realistic means that the necessary resources are available, and if not, steps can be taken to obtain them.

Time-bound means that there is a point in time when the objective will be completed.

- Is there a stated deadline?
- When will the objective be accomplished?

Performance Objectives

Task	Performance	Criterion	Condition
Begin with an action verb : verbs such as ‘write’ and ‘solve’ communicate intent more clearly than words like ‘know,’ ‘learn’ and ‘understand’	Answer this question: What will the employee know or be able to do? This indicates the observable behavior.	Describe how well the employee will know or be able to do the performance. Make sure it is measurable.	Describe the condition (material/equipment) that must exist for the employee to perform. Can begin with ‘given’ or ‘when.’

Example: Develop performance objectives for Jack and Jill by January 1 which follow the SMART formula and comply with the guidelines for employee performance appraisal system.