

# **INTERIM ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYEES AS A MAJOR INSTRUMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORGANIZATION'S PERSONNEL FUNCTION**

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**Summary:** The article presents the process of interim assessment, which is one of the most important components of the system of evaluating employees. This process, in particular, shows the main stages: stage design, implementation and use of the interim evaluations results. Each stage of the process indicated the scope of the activities associated with them. Evaluation system of employees should be adapted to the type of the organization (company), taking into account its peculiarity. Moreover, it should take into account also the specific objectives, procedures, consistent tools, specified criteria, methods and techniques for evaluating and judging.

**Keywords:** interim assessment, objectives of the evaluation, the process of evaluating

## **Introduction**

The issue of employees' evaluation is still valid and extremely important from the point of view of both; the organization and its employees. Evaluating employees is one of the most important steps in the process of human resource management. Assessment occurs at every stage of managerial (personnel) activities; starting from recruitment, allocation of tasks and their assessment, motivation, planning, professional development, displacement of employees or dismissal. Informing employees of the results obtained in the interim evaluation is an important factor to increase motivation among employees. Knowledge of the employees regarding the results of their assessment triggers the desire to develop and further improve the performance or prevent errors. Undoubtedly, the assessment also allows to identify the strengths and weaknesses of employees, as well as giving a sense of security and satisfaction. And thus – employees have a personal impact on the results of their work. Based on the results of the assessment, personnel decisions are made, which primarily relate to aspects of remuneration, promotion or dismissal. Constructing an effective and efficient system of evaluation of employees is one of the most important and challenging endeavors undertaken by the management.

## **1. Importance and goals of interim evaluation of employees**

Effective and efficient management of the organization is dependent on the ability to capitalize on employees' potential. In a constantly and rapidly changing conditions this

potential should be systematically monitored by the management of the organization. For this purpose, inter alia, interim evaluation of employees is undertaken.

Interim assessment has a formalized character is carried out according to pre-defined procedures, criteria, methods and techniques at certain intervals. Interim evaluations focus on the study findings, attitudes, behaviors and skills of employees. Therefore they are based primarily on three sets of criteria: efficiency, behavioral and competency but eligibility criteria and personality are not taken into account, which are important in the selection process of candidates for the job (Pawlak, 2011, p. 310). It should be emphasized that the unavoidable duty of assessing the employees relies on the managers of all levels. Interim assessment is important in many areas of personnel or management activities (Table 1).

*Table 1. Areas of utilizing results of interim assessment*

| AREA   | SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES  |
|--|--|
| I. Specifying and differentiating employees remuneration dependent on obtained results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remuneration increase, rewards, bonuses</li> <li>• Influence to increase employees motivation</li> </ul>  |
| II. Developing employees who have been highly assessed                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualification to a developing personnel</li> <li>• Accelerating promotion within carrer path for the best</li> <li>• Movement to higher or better job post</li> <li>• Training within professional improvement or gaining wider knowledge and skills</li> </ul> |
| III. Taking decisions concerning employees lowest rated or negatively rated            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving to a lower job posts</li> <li>• Directing to additional training</li> <li>• dismissal</li> </ul>   |

Source: Developed on the basis J. Dzieńdzior, *Ocenianie pracowników. Ujęcie teoretyczne i praktyczne*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Humanitas”, Sosnowiec 2008, p. 47

As shown in Table 1, the results of interim evaluations have a large impact on different areas of managerial operations and form the basis for personnel decisions. Therefore, great attention should be paid on designing an appropriate assessment system.

A properly designed and functioning system of evaluation of employees plays an important role in the organization. By evaluating employees good communication between the management and employees is created. The adopted rule of informing employees of the results of the evaluation in the form of a conversation with an employee is a sort of dialogue that builds a foundation of trust between the boss and the employee and vice versa.

In the literature is can be found a variety of classification evaluation purposes. However, the most common distinctions is expressed by three primary objectives (Penc, 2007, p. 184):

- corrective
- stabilizing
- development

**The corrective objective** is to introduce corrective adjustments to the achievement of the results by the employee. Of course, the employee should know the results of their assessment – so in the future they know what should be improved.

**The stabilizing objective** encourages the employee to continue the activities performed at a good level. It gives him the job satisfaction. It is the strengthening of the desired effects.

**The development objective** indicates the elements (lines of action, types of tasks) on which the assessor should focus in the future. It indicates the employee, what they should strive to (Penc, 2007, p. 184).

An interesting approach regarding assessment purposes is proposed by E. Jędrych, where the author focuses primarily on two objectives (Jędrych, 2007, p. 233):

- organizational
- psychosocial.

The organizational purpose is focused on the need to obtain information necessary to conduct the personnel activities in the company. While the **psychosocial objective** is associated with the impact on employees' attitudes through regular informing them about their achievements, mistakes and shortcomings, opportunities for promotion and career development (Jędrych, 2007, p. 233). Wider recognition of these objectives is presented in Table 2.

*Table 2. Objectives of employees' assesement*

| ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES   | PSYCHOSOCIAL OBJECTIVES  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning employment</li> <li>• Selection</li> <li>• Moving employees</li> <li>• Monitoring work results</li> <li>• Effective motivation</li> <li>• Employees training</li> <li>• Carrer management</li> <li>• Dismissal</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on work results</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Increase of self-esteem</li> <li>• Modification of employees behaviour</li> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Subjective career dimension</li> <li>• Improvement of social climate</li> </ul> |

Source: E. Jędrych (ed.), *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi dla menedżerów średniego szczebla*, Oficyna, Kraków 2007, p. 234

The other author, Czubasiewicz distinguished six objectives (functions) of employees assessment consideriong (Czubasiewicz, 2005, p. 84-88):

- informational function
- decision function
- corrective function
- motivational-educational function
- stabilizing function
- development function.

**Informational function** is concentrated on delivering information for the evaluator and the evaluated in the following scope:

- as employees carry out their duties,
- which behaviour is characteristic,
- what expectations are performed by employees in relation to each other work, their colleagues and superiors,

Moreover a feedback is forwarded, pointing out employee strengths and weaknesses and the expectations set by the employer.

**The decision function** is to use the results of assessment as the basis for decision-making in the field of personnel actions. This is mainly related to the movement of employees (the movement of human resources), rewarding – including the awards.

**The correction function** is not to punish employees, but disclosure of errors committed by them and raising their awareness of their causes to take such steps in the future to prevent the mistakes before committing. These adjustments will affect the attitudes, actions and behavior of employees.

**The motivational and educational function** promotes or encourages employees to achieve better results of work or their improvement. Rating affects their attitude and is an important stimulus influencing workers. The obtained results should be related (dependent) with the amount of salary.

**The stabilizing function** arises from the need to be evaluated and expects from the superior, confirmation that what he does, does well. Therefore, it is worth from time to time to ensure employees in the belief that the level of satisfaction of their work is satisfactory what influences him to consolidate positive attitudes towards work (Pawlak, 2011, p. 297).

**The development function** is focused on individual employee development, improvement and development of their careers. Rating allows to know the abilities, qualifications, current and potential employees possibilities. Through evaluating one get to know the strengths and weaknesses of employees and identify their individual and group training needs.

Analyzing the current discussion of the meaning and the purpose of the interim assessment, it should be noted that the assessment system must be closely related to the adopted and implemented the strategy of the organization. Interim assessment of employees is an important element of personnel policy and an effective instrument for managing the organization. Assessment of the effects resulting from the measurement of work or competence provides an opportunity for a dialogue between employees and superiors (the employer).

It should be emphasized that the use of interim evaluations in modern organizations is becoming a common practice. Although not all organizations do so. It goes without saying that the flow of the intangible benefits both for the organization and for the employees themselves.

## 2. The procedure for building a system of interim evaluations

Interim assessment holds a formal character and as the name suggests – is made from time to time by applying certain principles, tools and procedures that are fixed and repetitive nature. As mentioned earlier, the interim evaluation is comprehensive, covers all areas of work assessed, also contains elements of the assessment of employees skills and attitudes to work. The interim evaluation of employees should be taken into account in particular: the objectives of assessment, evaluation principles, criteria and methods, as well as procedures for evaluation of employees (Piotrkowski, 2014).

There is no universal system of evaluating employees, which would efficiently and effectively operate in any organization. Employee assessment system should be adapted to the type of organization (company) and should take into account the peculiarity of the business. Therefore, it must be well thought out, properly constructed and organized. This system should include: specific goals, procedures, consistent tools specified criteria, methods and techniques of assessment, as well as the principles of assessment. The process of constructing and implementation of the interim evaluation system, considering the following stages is presented in Table 3.

*Table 3. Process of building interim assesemnt in the organiation*

| Stages | Scope of activities   |
|--------|---|
| 1      | Identifying and clarifying the purpose or purposes of assessment                                      |
| 2      | Specifying categories of job posts – group of professionally-qualifying groups of evaluated employees |
| 3      | Determining and developing assessment criteria considering particular professional-qualifying groups  |
| 4      | Selecting methods and techniques of assesment   |
| 5      | Specyfing frequency of employees assessment   |
| 6      | Establishing rules according to which an assesment will be caried out                                 |
| 7      | Informing employed employees on criteria, method and rules of interim assessment                      |
| 8      | Running training or forwarding instructions for the assesors  |
| 9      | Implementing interim assesement   |
| 10     | Systematic improvement of the system  |

Source: Own development

**Identifying and clarifying the purpose or purposes of assessment** is the first step in the process of building evaluation system (including interim) in organizations. So the point is, what purpose the system would serve. As mentioned earlier, the objectives should be consistent with the strategic objectives of the organization. First of all, a specific evaluation system should support the mission and strategy of the organization.

The next stage of building an interim evaluation system in the organization is to determine the categories of employees, in other words, **to distinguish the so-called professionally-qualifying group**. This means that not the same criteria will be used towards all employees regarding, methods and techniques of assessment. It depends on their position, competence and seniority. Various aspects of work are assessed, so such differentiation is applied. Persons responsible for assessing should not forget that the assessment is based on the effects of work, not the employee per se. Behavior and personality traits of an employee are important, but they do not constitute a basis for the evaluation. Generally speaking, the assessment should be first and foremost based on: the results of the work, competence and motivation (Adamiec, Kożusznik, 2000, p. 174).

**Identifying and developing criteria for evaluation** is the next step in the process of building a system of interim evaluations that result from the assumed evaluation objectives. Criteria show the hierarchy of values cherished in a given organization and what areas are important for the management. Selection of appropriate criteria is very important as it impacts the effectiveness and quality of the assessment process. By choosing the appropriate criteria one should have foremost in mind (Golnau, 2008, p. 322):

- their flexibility and diversity of the employees groups
- the uniformity of their application to allow comparison of the results in time and each group
- specific and not excessive expand.

It is a big mistake to establish a universal set of criteria that can be applied regardless of the purpose of evaluation. Selection criteria should take into account the above-mentioned characteristics, considering what purpose they should serve. The next step should involve **the selection of appropriate methods and evaluation techniques**. The reality shows that the best effects are obtained through use carefully selected methods and techniques. This approach enriches and provides a more diverse amount of information that enable to take decisions that are more objective and personal (Golnau, 2008, p.322).

Determining **the frequency of the interim assessment** is quite important for the management of the organization. Therefore, the interim evaluation shall be formal, it should be carried out in an certain intervals. The frequency of evaluation depends essentially on the evaluation and many other aspects, among other things, such as corporate strategy, personnel policies, type of activity etc. Interim assessment should be made no more than once every three months, and no less frequently as every year. This is due to both the costs associated with it, as well as the decisions taken on their basis. The period between successive assessment should be long enough to allow to obtain reliable information that is necessary to draw the appropriate conclusions and making on their basis certain decisions.

Another important step in creating a system of assessment is to establish principles for the evaluation, which should be included in developed for this pur-

pose the regulations accessible by each assessor and evaluated. The most important principles that should be respected, include (Pocztowski, 2008, p. 227):

- the principle of systemic character
- the principle of regularity
- the principle of universality
- the principle of flexibility
- the principle of peculiarity
- the principle of transparency
- the principle of simplicity.

Knowledge and application of the above principles of assessment will help to avoid many mistakes and irregularities that affect the objectivity of the evaluation and its outcome. Another important step in the process of evaluating employees is **to inform about the criteria adopted, the method (the way) and principles of assessment**. In particular, knowledge of the assessment criteria allow the assessed employees to influence the results of its evaluation and thus streamline their specific activities.

Persons participating in the evaluation may be: superiors, colleagues, subordinates, customers, HR employees or the employee; should know how they will evaluate employees or themselves. Hence the need for **training in the form of instruction** or instruction to develop preferably in writing, eg. as an attachment to the questionnaire – a survey.

In developing the assessment system, including interim review many endeavors occurs at various stages, involving also the different actors. The scope of these endeavours holds the following aspects: psychological, subject-related and organizational (Table 4).

*Table 4. Scope of activities at the stage of preparation for assessment*

| Type of preparation    | Scope of activities   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>PSYCHOLOGICAL</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing employees in methods, rules and objectives of assessment</li> <li>• building employees trust towards assessment process</li> <li>• informing employees that detailed assessment results will be confidential</li> <li>• building awareness amongst employees on mutual benefits</li> <li>• informing employees on assessment schedule</li> <li>• not putting pressure and violence</li> </ul> |
| <b>SUBJECT-RELATED</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cooperation with external experts</li> <li>• developing with experts methods, objectives and procedures of assessment</li> <li>• training evaluators</li> </ul>  |

| Type of preparation | Scope of activities  |
|---------------------|--|
| ORGANIZATIONAL      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing dates, place and order of assessment</li> <li>• preparing necessary materials</li> <li>• preparing the schedule of assessment</li> </ul> |

Source: M. Sidor-Rządkowska, *Kształtowanie nowoczesnych systemów ocen pracowników*, Wydawnictwo Wolters Kluwer Polska SA, Warszawa 2013, p. 149

Implementation is the culmination of an interim evaluation of projects related to the completion of the process of building a system of interim evaluations. The practice can verify the developed evaluation system, which certainly should be continuously updated. Therefore, one should always check the staff appraisal system, whether it meets the established features, such as: how it contributes to the achievement of the objectives, motivating employees, decision support in HR processes.

### 3. The process of employees evaluation

Implementation of the evaluation process is a project that requires a comprehensive and professional approach. The assessment process can be divided into three stages, such as the design stage assessment, implementation phase, and the step of using assessments in personnel decisions<sup>1</sup>. After completion of the activities related to the development of the assessment system (first stage) should proceed with the implementation of the (second stage), in the process. The first two steps are detailed discussed in Table 1. It is very important that at the stage of implementation employees should be informed about the intent of their assessment. Employees may not be surprised by unannounced assessments. Therefore, in advance a planned schedule of the assessment must be submitted together with a note of evaluators, criteria and principles of assessment. A comprehensive approach of activities in various stages of the assessment process is shown in Table 5.

The first and second stage of the design of interim evaluations has been discussed in detail in section two. The third phase of the evaluation process involves the use of evaluation results. It serves as the basis for personnel decisions, eg. identification of career paths, increasing or decreasing the tasks, extending the work content, motivation – including remuneration, as well as dismissal.

<sup>1</sup> The presented proces of assessmnt is not the only one that can be found in the litertaure. Alicja Sajkiewicz proposes distinguishing two stages: design stage and execution stage. The other author Joanna Dzieńdziora proposes three stages, design, implementing and utilising (Dzieńdziora, 2008, p. 47-48). On the other hand Małgorzata Sidor-Rządkowska proposes the following stages: preparaion, implementing and integrating (Sidor-Rządkowska, 2006).



Table 5. *Process of assessment*

| Stages od assessment process    | Scope of activities  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. DESIGN                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing and clarification of assessment objectives</li> <li>• Specyfing job posts categories, criteria and rules of assessment</li> <li>• Developing and preparing questionnaires for the assessment considering assessment techniques</li> <li>• Specyfing frequency of assessment</li> <li>• Establishing rules of assessment</li> </ul> |
| 2. IMPLEMENTING                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing assessed employees on criteria, methods and assessment procedure</li> <li>• Running training or forwarding guidelines (instruction) to asesors</li> <li>• Running interim assessment</li> </ul>   |
| 3. UTILISING ASSESSMENT RESULTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and analysis of the results from obtained assessment</li> <li>• Informing employee on assessment results – assessment interview</li> <li>• Possible appeal procedure</li> <li>• Personel activities (managerial) on the basis on obtained assessment results</li> </ul>  |

Source: Own development

## Conclusions

Evaluating employees is a very important tool in the implementation of the HR function of the organization. In assessing employees the most often used forms are current and interim. Current form is an ad hoc and of non-formal character. On the other hand, interim form is systematic and formalized. Therefore, interim assessment should be carried out according to pre-defined procedures, criteria, methods and techniques at certain intervals. Interim evaluations focus on the study findings, attitudes, behaviors and skills of employees, which require professional preparation. Interim assessment is important in many areas of personnel or management activities. A properly designed and functioning system of evaluation of employees plays an important role in the organization. By evaluating employees the organization create good relations between the management and employees. The adopted rule of informing employees of the results of the evaluation in the form of a conversation with an employee is a sort of dialogue that builds a foundation of trust between the principal and the employee and vice versa. Assessing employees is an unavoidable duty of the managers regardless the position they occupy.

## OCENA OKRESOWA PRACOWNIKÓW JAKO GŁÓWNY INSTRUMENT W REALIZACJI FUNKCJI PERSONALNEJ W ORGANIZACJI

**Streszczenie:** W artykule przedstawiono proces oceniania okresowego, stanowiący jeden z najważniejszych komponentów systemu oceniania pracowników. W procesie tym w szczególności zaprezentowano główne jego etapy: etap projektowania, wdrażania i wykorzystania wyników ocen okresowych. Na każdym z etapów procesu wskazano na zakres przedsięwzięć z nimi związanych. System oceniania pracowników powinien być dostosowany do rodzaju organizacji (firmy), uwzględniać jej specyfikę. Powinien uwzględniać również: określone cele, procedury, spójne narzędzia, sprecyzowane kryteria, metody i techniki oceniania oraz zasady oceniania.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ocenianie okresowe, cele oceniania, proces oceniania

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