

# Assessing Performance: Employees Need to Know What Is Expected of Them

## Part I

Dennis McCarron

One of the more frequent questions posed by tire and service dealers when dealing with performance assessments (or employee reviews) is the obvious one: “How do I get started?” That is quickly followed by “How long should they be?” or “When should I do them?” or “What should I say?”

Let’s start by answering the first question. Once we get the structure of a proper assessment out of the way, then we’ll get into the details of what you should say and how long it should be. Assessments are a tool for communication between employer and employee to understand expectations, and should be open for periodic review and change throughout the year. Assessments are not a weapon to be wielded when you want someone to get fired or quit.

### What to assess

Let’s say you don’t do assessments. You used to or just never did them or someone used to and they are not working for you anymore. Bottom line, they haven’t been done in quite some time. If any of that is true, that’s a shame, since the overwhelming majority of workers actively seek out approval from their bosses and want to know what defines good work.

Employees and staff work much better when their jobs are defined, when they have a concrete vision of what will earn them rewards or punishment and can accurately describe what they should be focusing on at any moment. Yes, there are some woodpeckers (cranky bad behavior employees who should have been promoted to “customer” a long time ago yet still collect a paycheck), and we will address them in a later issue of Modern Tire Dealer.

September 13, 2017

Most employees want an assessment of their work, so you should get on board doing them. How do you start?

First, come up with job descriptions, standards, and expectations. You can't do an assessment without the building block element of a job description. If it sounds like a lot of work, it isn't. Start with major employment requirements like the following:

- showing up for work on time.
- being adequately well groomed.
- being committed to not only working in a safe manner, but also reporting any discrepancies.
- wearing a clean and approved uniform.

A review of the employee's interactions with other employees and customers is also important. Does the employee work well alongside co-workers? Interactions with customers should be based on job title (sales, technician or management).

Then add some specifics, also based on title, regarding basic tasks. Maybe the manager is expected to complete work schedules two weeks in advance, or technicians are required to inspect and repair vehicles provided to them by the sales team dependent on their level of repair skills.

Salespeople or counter people should be evaluated based on whether or not they listen to customer needs and provide appropriate solutions to those needs (think suggesting an alignment check when a customer wants to buy tires).

Try to keep job descriptions to one page. Job descriptions are employment agreements between the owner and the employee.

### **Creating an assessment form**

After you have developed job descriptions and employees are aware of them — and have access to them — it's time to start building an assessment form.

Assessments need an area for management to rate employees on a scale. I like simple and easy, so three columns on the right hand side marked Needs, Meets and Exceeds works for me. You can get more complicated, but it's not needed.

Start with "complies with job description," then add goals and objectives. Be specific and reasonable here with some stretch room for exceptional employees.

Remember, this is a job description defining the actions employees take on a regular, daily and monthly basis. Define what acceptable employment targets are and what falls below them. For instance, an employee target of 200 tires a month sold at 28% gross profit is standard, while 250 tires sold at 33% is exceptional. Anything under 175 should be defined as "needs improvement" and will be met with management follow up.

Each employee can have different assessment points as long as they are based on tenure, experience, skill level, or disciplinary improvement plans.

*In part two, McCarron will present the five rules of carrying out successful employee assessments.*

*Dennis McCarron is executive director of Dealer Strategic Planning Inc., a company that manages multiple tire dealer 20 Groups in the U.S. ([www.dsp-20group.com](http://www.dsp-20group.com)). To contact McCarron, email him at [dennis@dsp-20group.com](mailto:dennis@dsp-20group.com).*