



## Explaining Met Expectation Ratings to High Performers

Sometimes high-performing employees have a difficult time accepting a Met Expectations rating on their annual review. These conversations are challenging, but understanding the psychology behind the employee's response, and being able to explain what a Met Expectations rating essentially means will help improve your employee's feelings about their performance review.

### The Psychology Behind the Disappointment

A rating scale based on expectations is typically viewed as a ranking system of 1-5, with a standard rating of Meets Expectations being a 3. Most employees have grown up with an educational grading system issuing grades A through F, which with middle range of a "C" grade. "C" grades signify average- simple, common, adequate but ordinary- so for most employees a "C" seems less than stellar. High-performing individuals are not usually motivated for "C's". They are striving for the top grade, an "A". Therefore, it is important to recognize that receiving a 3/"C"/Met Expectations on an annual performance review can be demotivating for many employees.

### Met Expectation Rating Defined

A rating of Met Expectations vs. Exceeds Expectations can be a grey area, particularly when the expectations for the role might be held to a high standard. When you work in a pool of highly competent, carefully chosen employees, a rating of Met Expectations means your employee is doing an excellent job as it is defined through the stated objectives. Help your employee by defining what a Met Expectations rating means:

#### Met Expectations: Solid Performer

- Always meet expectations/objectives, highly reliable
- At times exceeds expectations
- At times contributes additional value
- Does an excellent job, as the job is defined
- Will go above and beyond expectations when asked
- Provides a positive impact on people and team performance

In comparison to all workers, working for a company whose employees are made up of strong performers, being ranked with the majority of their peers means that your employee is performing really well. Furthermore, meeting the performance expectations of a company that has high standards, means your employee is performing remarkably well. Reinforce that message and use the performance review to provide direction on how the employee can improve and what areas they can grow in the upcoming year.

