SELECTED REFERENCES
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SECTION, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
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EMPLOYEE RATING*

I. GENERAL


Selection of traits to be rated, weighting and definition of traits, types of rating scales, reliability and validity of ratings, and training of raters are covered. A short list of references, most of them from psychological sources, is included.


Covers benefits and scope of rating, installing a program, constructing a form, and administering the program. Also includes a bibliography and several sample forms.

Halsey, George D. Making and using industrial service ratings; practical suggestions for measuring and rating individual performance of executives and employees including how to use these ratings in improving performance. New York. Harper and Brothers. 1944. 149 pp. $2.50.

The author writes from a background of experience in both industry and government. His book includes a chapter on the efficiency rating system used in the federal government.


A comprehensive, annotated bibliography of the literature on rating arranged under the following main headings: “General Discussion,” “Administration of Merit Rating Programs,” “Specific Types of Merit Rating,” “Report of Merit Rating Research,” and “Report of Merit Rating Experience.”


* Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.
The first part of this report outlines the principles to be followed in installing and operating an employee rating program. The second part contains rating plans of six manufacturing companies, one retail store, and five government agencies. Sample rating forms are included in the descriptions of the plans.


Examines at length the advantages and hazards of employee rating and discusses methods for making ratings more statistically reliable.

2. CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS OF RATING PRACTICES


"...rating is of value in industry only when its limitations as a scientific instrument are fully appreciated." Discusses briefly the advantages and drawbacks of various methods of determining the validity and reliability of ratings.


An appraisal which, on balance, concludes that, in spite of its limitations, employee rating is of value as "an orderly method for the recording of opinions at regular periods." Includes suggestions for developing a company program and emphasizes especially the importance of having supervisory participation from its inception.


Outlines the bases for a scientific approach to rating as derived from a study of successful and unsuccessful rating programs. The systematic procedure for the development of a successful program advocated by the author includes: "1. Establish the purpose; 2. Consider the components; 3. Develop a tentative program; 4. Try out the program; 5. Evaluate the results."


Describes a technique for developing a rating device based on performance records or, for jobs where such records are not available, on the translation of subject trait names into observable behavioristic terms.

Criticizes the graphic rating scale on the following grounds: "it assumes that human qualities can be rated," "it assumes that qualities are real and isolable factors," and "it assumes that qualities convey the same meaning to all raters." "... in spite of attempts made during the past twenty-five years we have not agreed on the qualities that should be rated or the meanings of the terms that are used. This would seem to indicate the futility of attempts at rating qualities, and to suggest that ratings would be more successful when they are limited to records of behavior, and when interpretations of these records are relegated to the limbo of forgotten events." The author proposes a "Frequency Rating Scale" to record how often an employee displays a specified behavior pattern.


A critical discussion of prevalent rating practices and beliefs. Among other things, the author argues that a rating scale must contain a sufficient number of work factors to give an adequate profile, that the use of trait names is likely to give misleading results, and that a numerical score should serve only as a guide, not as a substitute for the complete rating record.


Supports "the thesis that the graphic rating scale with numerical scoring has serious logical difficulties and practical inadequacies... so serious that they more than offset any advantages" claimed for these techniques. Points out the need for research in methods of evaluating workers and suggests, in the meantime, the use of a simpler technique.


Discusses the pitfalls to be avoided in using graphic rating charts and offers as an alternative method the "forced distribution system" by which the supervisor rates all his employees on only two factors—job performance and promotability—and distributes his ratings into a predetermined number of groups.

3. Reports of Company Experience


Relates rating to the wage and salary administration program and describes a conference method for rating supervisors and junior executives in the John B. Stetson Company related to salary adjustments.


Presents an executive rating form, states the purposes of executive rating, and recommends twelve precautions against misuse of the scale.
Collins, Paul J. “How we set up our merit review plan.” Factory Management and Maintenance (330 West 42nd St., New York 18), July, 1944. pp. 94-96. 35 cents.

Describes plan used by General Aircraft Corporation in conjunction with a job rating plan. Employees are rated every three months for purposes of deciding which ones are to be given 5-cent merit increase.


Describes a plan used in the Calumet & Hecla Consolidated Copper Company for ratings of all plant executives. Each man is rated by three superiors, three equals, and three subordinates. Summaries of the ratings are given to the executives, but the ratings are not made part of permanent company records.


Outline of procedure required in the development of a rating program based on experience in the offices of the Atlantic Refining Company.


Gives reasons why training of raters is important and discusses various methods which have been used for this purpose.


Reports the successful integration of a rating and a counseling program. Employee progress reports made by supervisors were used as a basis for interviews after the supervisors had discussed them with employees.


A description of the Link-Belt Company program which covers all grades of employees. The authors attribute to the successful operation of the program “an equitable wage structure, better morale, and an improved organization.”


Describes the program for rating office employees in the Bridgeport Brass Company. The rating form used, called a “development report,” is filled out by the supervisor in consultation with the employee being rated, and it includes the supervisor’s suggestions for helping the employee to become a more effective worker.