Review Article

LIS Professionals: Performance Appraisal System - Blueprint

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I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This paper presents a comprehensive plan for a Performance Appraisal System tailored specifically for Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals. With the growing complexity and evolving demands of library and information services, it is essential to establish an effective evaluation framework that ensures accountability, fosters professional growth, and enhances service quality. A paper measuring both personal and organisational objectives focuses on key components of a performance appraisal system: goal setting, competency evaluation, and feedback mechanisms. This proposed system is truly holistic in its approach, one that underpinned an insistence on a quantitative measure- resource usage, cataloguing efficiency, and a qualitative assessment- user satisfaction, and professional development.

This proposed system has a completely comprehensive approach, with a focus on both quantitative measures (resource utilization, cataloging efficiency) and qualitative assessments (user satisfaction, professional growth).

Keywords: LIS, Measure, Appraisal System

Introduction

In keeping with the professional roles of librarians, information specialists, archivists, and support staff, as well as through improving learning and skill-building endeavours, it also pays close attention to problems and potential obstacles during implementation, which include all kinds of resistance to change, as well as the lack of standardised metrics, since it would demand tools customised for all the types of libraries: academic, public, and special.

Therefore, this study will attempt to present a structured yet flexible performance appraisal system by providing a framework that will be beneficial for LIS professionals and library administrators in order to improve individual performance, organisational outcomes, and high-quality delivery of information service. This would also provide the general need for strategic human resource management in the LIS field in support of the advancement of library services in the digital age.[1,2] The main goal of a comprehensive performance appraisal (P.A.) system is to compare current performance with predetermined targets. Through periodic planned discussions between two people. Training and consulting on areas that need corrective action to increase overall efficiency for the benefit of the entire organisation as well as employees.

Purpose of the Performance Appraisal System

- Tracking individual efforts
- Integrating and coordinating individual efforts in a cooperative effort
- Provide protection and response to individuals
- Provide an avenue for research or praise of individuals' efforts
- Provide a fair and consistent basis for the distribution of rewards and punishments

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Objectives of the Performance Appraisal System

- Management decisions i.e. Promotion, transfer and allocation of financial rewards, etc.
- Employee development i.e. Identification of training needs, performance feedback and more
- Personnel research i.e. Creation of manpower data for pay and supervisors. To get to know subordinates and assist subordinates in setting salaries career planning matching people with jobs promotion helping with success and failure, etc.

Conducting personnel research, including data collection on salary and supervisory roles. To learn to know subordinates and help them determine salaries, plan their careers, connect people with jobs, promote them, and help them succeed and fail, etc

Management by Objectives (MbO) helps us evaluate the overall performance of an organisation and its individuals. MbO has the following elements.

- Set clear and measurable objectives to achieve within a specified time frame.
- Manage activities and performance to achieve set goals.
- Evaluation of performance in achieving objectives systematic approach to P.S. A.

Evaluation of performance in meeting objectives using a systematic approach to P.S.A. The system process has many steps and several activities that the library must perform.

Systems Approach to the Process of Performance Appraisal

The process of the P.A. system has many stages and involves multiple activities to be undertaken by the library. To achieve any objective, we are required to integrate planning, implementation and control criteria to form a complete system.[3]

Planning Stage

Planning consists of all activities that must be carried out before the start of any programme. The planning stage involves various activities as follows:

- **Commitment of top management:** The library is a sub-system of any organisation. Hence, to institute an effective P.A. system for library employees, the top management of the library must be completely sold on it. Generally, the management gives the okay to proceed but is not prepared to stick with it when problems arise at a later stage. Workable systems of appraisal take time to fully develop and without the full backup of senior executives within the institution even the best of the systems is damned to be a failure before being started.
- **Designing an integrated system:** Following the overall MbO approach, each appraisal system must

be integrated with all others, with each phase carefully designed to smoothly lead into the next.

- **Informing key employees:** Once top management has formally approved the institution of a formal P.A. system and design work has begun, a very important juncture has been reached. At this point, it is the responsibility of management to inform all library employees involved, not all details but at least the overall purpose of the proposed new plan which needs effective communication before launching a new venture.[4]
- **Building motivational levels:** Through the effective communication process, all the library employees have been officially informed of the plan itself. Another thing required is to secure high motivation for library employees' acceptance of the programme, the organisation must convey all details in terms of benefits to the library employees viz. what the programme will do for them as an individual, in terms of personal growth, greater job satisfaction etc. Once it is marketed, it will be far easier to implement the plan when ready.
- **Proper job analysis:** One of the first steps in planning an effective system is the creation of an accurate job analysis, which is 'the process of analysis and assessment of relative contents of jobs of the library, to place them in an acceptable rank order, which can be used as a basis of pay structure'.[4] It is necessary to determine what level of skill, job knowledge and ability will be required for each job of the library to accomplish the library work properly.

The job analysis should be done by a trained superior person by giving him sufficient time to do it thoroughly. It should never be considered a one-shot approach but a continuous process. Special work situations such as seasonal workloads in reading rooms at the time of examination, slack periods during vacation time and other related factors that do not represent normal work cycles should be avoided.

- **Forms design and approval:** The P.A. system uses a variety of forms to appraise the performance of an individual. Among many other factors, each form should be i. clearly understood, ii. achieve a stated purpose, iii. allow room for flexibility. Before any form is printed it should be thoroughly reviewed by all parties concerned and undergo a trial test before it is printed.

Top management be made aware of all steps to date, since the planning stage is almost completed and the date for implementation is quite close, it is vital that all key executives of the library are completely familiar with every facet. A simple step but cannot be overlooked.

- **Training of supervisors:** Adequate time must be budgeted here to train all personnel who will be

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doing the actual rating during appraisal sessions. Every element of the system must be carefully reviewed starting with the overall objectives, then reviewing criteria, methods handling sessions, feedback, and coaching through final follow-up.[5]

- **Trial run:** It is here that the system is given a 'shakedown' to determine if any further corrective action or adjustments are required. Usually, a test is made with a Librarian newly trained in the skills involved to conduct the appraisal interview and a subordinate whose job falls into the general area under review, careful follow-up notes are taken by the librarian, and this forms the basis for final adjustments required.

Implementation Stage

The implementation stage follows the planning process, where the direct activity of the programme is carried out. The implementation stage also involves several activities which are as follows.

- **Selecting areas for approval:** Different jobs within the library will have varying criteria used in the evaluation. Although all librarians will have been trained in P.A. skills at this point the library will have to make a decision whether to implement the system throughout the entire organisation at once or follow a staggered timetable, starting the procedure by areas (or departments) on a planned basis.

- **Procedures for coaching and counselling:** Having all Librarians trained in proper coaching techniques is not quite enough, special procedures should be installed into the system to allow each librarian adequate time to discuss 'special situations' with executives to whom they report. Again, this requires good communication within the library and is usually facilitated by special forms filled out by the Librarian to summarise a problem area to be discussed with a superior.

- **Performance standards:** Performance standards are criteria of excellence which can be treated as a model for comparison to evaluate the performance of library employees.

An important part of any appraisal plan is to develop specific performance standards on which evaluation can take place in an unbiased manner. In other words, when rating performance in quantitative areas, it is crucial to specify exactly what has to be accomplished by the subordinate to qualify for 'acceptable performance' according to standards set for that type of library.[6]

- **Feedback analysis:** Feedback on how well the system is operating is coordinated back to top management by both librarians and subordinates. This type of feedback will be both formal (through reports and critiques) and

informal (by trained observations). However, received, when properly validated it will give a continuing measure of how well the system is operating, and of course, should be maintained on an ongoing basis.

- **Discrepancy report:** Built into the system should be an automatic feedback mechanism that allows for a formal review when a discrepancy arises in an evaluation between a librarian and a subordinate. This is usually in the form of a special report outlining the area of disagreement that is designed to pave the way for some type of resolution between the parties before the start of the next appraisal period.

- **Critical incident report:** During each appraisal cycle it is the Librarian's responsibility to keep a current log of incidents (both favourable and negative) relating to the subordinates' performance on the job. It should always include the date it occurred, exactly what took place, and if it related to goal accomplishment. This gives each librarian an excellent cumulative tool on which to aid in coaching during the following appraisal meeting.

- **Evaluation of librarians:** Since each librarian's main duty is to help their subordinates reach their maximum potential, the effectiveness of each manager's appraisal process serves as a gauge of the librarian's growth as a person and as a member of the company team.

- **Dates of future reviews:** It simply means that the next appraisal session with the subordinate should always have a set date set before the current meeting ends. This should always be done at regular intervals and is never left "vague".

Stage of Control

Lastly, the most important control aspect needs to be implemented. Here, the system can be completed by measuring the effectiveness of the activity being reviewed, providing corrective action if needed, and starting to interlock with the planning stage once more. The control stage is an ongoing procedure. The entire plan's efficacy is monitored and managed by the organisation.[7]

A thorough progress assessment is conducted to ascertain whether all departments or divisions are functioning according to the general schedule established by the library's parent organisation some months prior.

- **Review of progress:** A thorough progress assessment is conducted to ascertain whether all departments or divisions are functioning according to the general schedule established by the library's parent organisation some months prior.

- **System analysis:** It is typically implemented six to eight months following the system's launch and is closely linked to the progress review. Its main goal is to evaluate the system as a whole for strengths and potential weaknesses and, if necessary, implement corrective measures or modifications.

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- **Goals accomplished:** How well the library's goals are being met via the P.A. system. In some instances, analysis may reveal a well-functioning system that isn't fulfilling all of the goals that were initially established for it.

- **Form evaluation:** Several forms employed in the evaluation are frequently somewhat modified by a library after several months of use. These are often little adjustments, but they can have a big impact if system efficiency is to be maintained at high levels.

- **Evaluation of progress:** Usually held at the end of the first year of operation, this is a formal gathering of all important librarians. Future plans, ideas, and helpful criticism are explored.

- **Getting ready for the upcoming cycle:** Plans for the following cycle are developed here since the P.A. method is predicated on meticulous preparation and recurring evaluation. In reality, this will differ greatly between organisations based on a number of variables, including the number of workers and the types of positions covered by the evaluation system.[8]

Conclusion

The development and implementation of a Performance Appraisal System for LIS Professionals is crucial for enhancing both individual and organisational performance within the library and information services sector. As the role of LIS professionals continues to evolve, driven by technological advancements and shifting user needs, it becomes imperative to establish a robust framework for assessing and fostering professional growth.

This paper has outlined a comprehensive system that combines both quantitative and qualitative measures, ensuring a balanced approach to evaluating performance. By considering various dimensions such as job competencies, service quality, user satisfaction, and professional development, the proposed system offers a holistic view of the contributions of LIS professionals. Furthermore, the integration of continuous feedback and goal-setting mechanisms will support career development and help align individual performance with broader institutional goals. Ultimately, the performance appraisal system for LIS professionals is not just a tool for evaluation, but a strategic approach to fostering a culture of continuous improvement. It contributes to the professionalisation of the LIS field, supports staff development, and helps libraries remain responsive to the needs of users in an ever-changing information landscape. By ensuring that LIS professionals are recognised, supported, and continually empowered to improve, libraries will be better positioned to provide high-quality, innovative services in the digital age. In closing, this plan provides a solid foundation for enhancing the performance management process in libraries, ensuring

that LIS professionals continue to evolve in their roles and contribute to the ongoing advancement of library and information services worldwide.

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