

Mid-year appraisals to keep staff motivated

Namrata Singh | TNN

Mumbai: Appraisals may no longer exist as once-a-year phenomena. A growing number of companies are opting for mid-year—and even quarterly—reviews. The main argument in favour of this trend is that it may not be wise for a company to wait as long as one year to assess employee performances.

Whether it is to reward employees for something they did two quarters back or bringing them back on the path of growth, in case they have strayed, companies have realized the earlier they do so, the better. Organizations like Deutsche Bank and Akzo Nobel India have been following mid-term performance reviews for a few years now, while the list of other companies following this model appears to be growing. Nivea India is among those which have re-

cently adopted the practice.

According to Makarand Khatavkar, MD and head, HR at Deutsche Bank, the bank is trying to make its mid-term reviews more robust. The move is aimed at making managers and employees more accountable. "We are currently conducting a communication and education exercise to train and convey to all our employees about the new performance system," said Khatavkar.

At Deutsche Bank, performance standards are being made more objective so that they are easy to understand and implement. This is based on a research that shows that people to whom the performance systems are communicated well perform 25% better, said Khatavkar.

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events which date back a few quarters could go unnoticed. At global paints and coatings major, Akzo Nobel India, appraisals are a continuous process. "The HR team conducts workshops with managers before the mid-year and year-end cycle based on the performance and develop-

ment dialogue process. The mid-year review is not about ratings but is geared at reviewing and providing guidance to the employees. The year-end process, on the other hand, focuses more on self assessment and involves feedback by both primary and secondary reviewer," said Sangeeta Pandey, director, HR, Akzo Nobel India.

HCL Technologies is looking at a unique experiment this year — whether appraisals could be based on feedback from peers and subordinates and if the same practice could be extended to rewards and recognitions as well. The company is looking at piloting this experiment with a small group. The company, however, didn't elaborate on details as the process is in early stages.

Some companies like Adobe Systems have done away with annual appraisals altogether. "The archaic nature of the whole thing (an-

nual appraisals) is slowly fading away. One year is too long a time to wait to appraise people and get their feedback. Some companies are even looking at quarterly appraisals," said Ronesh Puri, MD, Executive Access, a head-hunting firm.

Khatavkar of Deutsche Bank, however, feels that quarterly appraisals would be an "over kill". "But, what I personally do with my team is to hold structured review meetings every quarter to keep them on track, a formal quarterly discussion with every member on their performance," he said.

Companies which have recently adopted mid-year appraisals believe it adds a lot of value to the whole process of evaluation. Nivea India, which started mid-year appraisals in June last year, said the objective was to help in course correction, with an aim to give feedback.