

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**EXAMINATION OF THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL  
SYSTEM AT GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS GROUP LIMITED,  
HEAD OFFICE, ACCRA**

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**EXAMINATION OF THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS AT  
GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS GROUP LIMITED HEAD OFFICE,  
ACCRA**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

### **Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Name: Felicia Agbodza

Signature ..... Date.....

### **Supervisor's Declaration**

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Francis Enu- Kwesi.

Signature:..... Date.....

## **ABSTRACT**

Any efficient performance appraisal scheme should ensure fairness and aim at giving opportunity for employees to air their views. The objective of the study was, to examine the performance appraisal system as practiced in the Graphic Communication Group Limited and establish its effectiveness and weaknesses so as to suggest ways of improving it.

Primary and secondary data were used to accomplish the objective. Instruments used were questionnaire and the methods employed were personal interviews. Stratified and purposive sampling methods were used, and the data was processed and analyzed using comparative analysis framework and descriptive and statistical analysis. The determined sample size was 205. Based upon the staff list as a sampling frame, the lottery method was used to select 205 staff who were then given questionnaires to fill. After persistent calls and regular visits over several months 54 questionnaires were retrieved.

The performance appraisal system at GCGL is not very effective, and employees do not know the essence of the entire exercise. In addition the system does not encourage employees to do self appraisal. No meaningful follow up is made to assist those who fall below standard. The study concluded that generally the above trend indicates that there is an urgent need for managers of the organization to undertake in-depth training in performance appraisal process. It was therefore recommended that the human resource department should train appraisers in the area of performance target setting. Appraisees should also be encouraged to have access to completed appraisal report.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my husband, children and family.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

1. **PA** Performance Appraisal
2. **HR** Human Resource
3. **GCGL** Graphic Communications Group Limited
4. **DRC** Democratic Republic of Congo
5. **MBO** Management by Objectives
6. **SPSS** Statistical Product and Service Solution
7. **MD** Managing Director
8. **SMART** S Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the study**

Every growing organization must have in place an effective and very efficient performance appraisal system which would help to achieve the overall goals and specific objectives of the organization (Cascio, 2002). Performance appraisal is the process by which organizations set goals, determine standards, assign and evaluate work, and distribute rewards and, for organizations that operate across different countries and continents, performance appraisal strategies cannot be one dimensional. Human resource managers need systems that can be applied to a range of cultural values.

Performance appraisal outlines the tools to understand and measure performance in a range of socio-economic and cultural contexts. It raises issues surrounding expatriate workers and, in providing both comparative analysis and in-depth coverage, represents an excellent overview of this key aspect of globalisation. A performance appraisal (PA) is an important human resource (HR) process for the global organization. It has been agreed that customisation of the performance appraisal system is a function of global integration, cultural distance and the upstream/downstream nature of performance appraisal activities moderated by contextual enterprise variables (Narvile, 1992).

The performance appraisal process has become the heart of human resource management system in organizations. Performance appraisal defines and measures performance of the employees and the organization as a whole. It is a tool for assessing the performance of organization. The important issues and points concerning

performance appraisal in the present world are focus of performance appraisals is turning towards career development based on dialogues and discussions with superiors. Performance measuring, rating and review systems have become more detailed, structured and person specific than before. Performance related pay is being incorporated in the strategies used by organizations. Trend pointed towards a 360-degree feedback system (Kotter, 1978).

The problems with the implementation of performance appraisal processes are being anticipated and efforts are being made to resolve them. In India, performance appraisal processes are faced with a lot of obstacles, the most prominent being the lack of quantifiable or performance indicators. With the latest mantra in organizations across the world “get paid according to what you contribute”, the focus of organizations is to turn to performance management and specifically to individual performance (Pettersen, 2004 page 241).

Performance appraisal helps to rate the performance of employees and evaluate their contribution towards organizational goals. If the process of performance appraisals is formal and properly structured, it helps employees to clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and gives direction to the individual’s performance. It also helps to align individual performances with organizational goals as well as review their performance (Sahl, 1990).

Performance appraisal takes into account past performance of employees and focuses on improving the future performance of employees. Goal setting can transform organizations to world class performance based working organizations. Setting key performance targets for each and every individual and linking them to performance based appraisal makes for a vibrant result oriented work culture. With this in mind, organizations offer employee appraisal system training presentation on goal setting,

key performance areas and performance appraisal systems.

Many successful companies help employees combine feedback, survey results and information from performance discussions into one performance appraisal document called an individual development plan. The plan includes the goals, timetable and resources needed for the employee to succeed. The document provides the employee's manager with a tool to facilitate future discussions, track progress and help the employee maintain focus. Although it was simple, it was not necessarily easy. It takes a lot of planning for all the pieces fit together, thus supporting each other individually and collectively (Thompson & Mabey, 1994).

According to Kavanagh (1987), for any organization to remain in business, it ought to recruit employees with the necessary knowledge, skills and ability. Such individuals need to be motivated, through good performance appraisal processes. If performance appraisal is not effectively carried out, the working spirit of staff could be dampened leading to low productivity and high wastage in the long run. Long term personnel planning is also facilitated since it becomes easier to determine who should be promoted now, who should be ready after further experience and training and who is not performing satisfactorily in his present job. Performance appraisal is fast gaining ground in many organizations across Africa. Sahl (1990) noted that an effective employee appraisal helps management to take administrative decisions relating to promotion, salary increment, training, development, transfers, demotions and dismissals without much conflict. The results of appraisal are sometimes used fairly or unfairly. Any efficient performance appraisal scheme should therefore ensure fairness and aim at giving employees the opportunity to air their views. It should also seek to identify training needs, career path planning, and discussion of development opportunities and general performance improvement of the whole organization.

The importance of performance appraisal system is also recognised in Ghana, which is why such systems had been put in place in almost all organizations, including Graphic Communication Group Limited. Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) is the largest newspaper publishing and printing company in Ghana. It was established in 1962 and the Government of Ghana, acquired the company that same year. It was subsequently incorporated in 1965 as a statutory corporation and was converted into an autonomous limited liability company in 1999 with the State holding 100 percent shares. The company's name was subsequently changed to the Graphic Communications Group Limited. Through its newspapers, the company aims at improving lives through information and knowledge dissemination. It seeks to do this by achieving leadership in disseminating high quality information and other products.

The mission statement of Graphic Communication Group Limited is "To be market leaders in dissemination of authentic information, advertising and publication of quality print products. In order to achieve this mission,GCGL distinguish itself by committing to exceed customers' expectation, by setting new standards using cutting edge technology with competent and well motivated workforce.In dealing with our stakeholders, we will be guided by professionalism, objectivity and excellence".The company's vision is 'To improve lives through authentic information and knowledge dissemination' (Graphic Communications Group Ltd, 2008) Graphic Communication Group Limited has a permanent training manager who organizes staff training programmes every six months.

As a department solely responsible for staff training prior to every training there is training need assessment. According to the training manager, after the training target is set at the beginning of the year, employees are made to understand what is expected of them. All doubts concerning the target set are clearly explained in order to put



employee in a proper frame of mind. The supervisors make sure the targets set are SMART that is specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic and time bound. There is a mid- year review of the target, which enables the appraiser and the appraisee to make a realistic analysis of the target around this time.

As it is half of the year, the appraisee should be about 50 percent through with the entire target. Any mark below this should be an indication that the target is not achievable. At the end of the year the appraisals are done after the subordinates are given a time line within which the holistic assessment is carried out. At the end of the period, employees are given performance based merit increases in their salaries. Depending on the result, training could be carried out.

### **Statement of the problem**

Organizations are concerned with efficient realization of goals, and this requires the input of employees. Thus, for any organization (including Graphic Communications Group) to remain in business, it ought to recruit employees with the necessary knowledge, skills and ability. Such individuals need to be motivated, through good performance appraisal process. The issue then is: what kind of performance appraisal system does Graphic Communication Group Limited apply and how does it contribute to efficiency and effectiveness of employees? (Thompson, 2007).

Target setting is critical if good results are expected from performance appraisal. Targets are not set at GCGL yet performance appraisal is carried out, what then is the basis for the appraisal? And how acceptable is it to employees? Do employees feel discriminated against, based on the results? These questions triggered the researcher, to find out what reasons account for this trend and give recommendations to management on how to surmount this problem.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study generally sought to examine the performance appraisal systems used by GCGL. The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the existing performance appraisal system of the GCGL.
2. Determine the effectiveness of the current appraisal system in the GCGL.
3. Explore areas of performance appraisal where improvement would be needed, and
4. Make recommendations to stakeholders in GCGL for enhancing performance appraisal system in the company.

### **Research questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What kind of performance appraisal system is practiced at GCGL?
2. How effective is the performance appraisal system at GCGL?
3. How can the existing performance appraisal system at GCGL be improved?

### **Significance of the study**

This study will contribute to policy formulation and implementation in private and public sector organizations. Additionally, it will add to existing literature on performance appraisal systems in organizations. Furthermore, the study will serve as resource material and source of information for employers and employees, and establish the importance of performance appraisal as a major channel for effectively and efficiently assessing employees for promotion, demotion and transfers in an organization like Graphic Communications Group Limited.

## **Organization of the study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one includes the background of the study, objectives of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two is made up of review of related literature, starting with definitions of performance appraisal, purpose of PA, frequency of PA, characteristics of effective PA, and approaches to measuring job performance. Chapter three captures the methodology of the study. This includes the study design, study area, population, sample size and procedures, methods of data collection, and ethical considerations. Chapter four contains the analyses of field data. Finally, chapter five focuses on the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter review the conceptual issues about performance appraisal, such as its definition, purpose, frequency, characteristics, approaches to measuring job performance in organizations and the category of persons who are qualified as evaluators. Problems associated with the management of PA system and the different errors are also discussed.

#### **Definitions of performance appraisal**

Baker (2002) defines performance appraisal as a special form of evaluation involving comparison of an employee with a performance standard which describes what the employee is expected to do in terms of behaviour

and results. On his part, Petterson (2004) defines it as a method by which the job performance of an employee is evaluated generally in terms of quality, quantity, cost and time. Performance appraisal is a part of career development and regular reviews of employee performance within organizations.

Performance appraisal forms a basis for personnel decisions on salary increases, promotions and disciplinary actions. Additionally, it seeks to provide the opportunity for organizational diagnosis and development and to facilitate communication between

employees and management. The system tries to validate selection techniques and human resource policies to meet equal employment opportunity requirements (Armstrong, 2001).

According to Thompson (2007), an employee performance appraisal is a process which often combines both written and oral elements whereby management evaluates and provides feedback on employee job performance, including steps to improve or redirect activities as necessary. Documenting performance provides a basis for pay increases and promotions. Thompson continues that an appraisal also serves to help staff members to improve their performance and is an avenue by which they can be rewarded or recognized for a job well done. In addition, they can serve a host of other functions, such as a launching point from which companies can clarify and shape responsibilities in accordance with business trends, provides clear lines of management-employee communication, and spur re-examination of potentially hoary business practices.

Smith (2008) defines and explains performance appraisal with emphasis and focus on both performance and personality. He defines and explains performance appraisal as concentrating on historical performance actions that had already taken place and also, on the general make up of the appraisee. Generally, performance or employee appraisal, aimsto give employees feedback on performance, identify employee training needs and document criteria used to allocate organizational rewards.

In Africa, literature abounds on the subject, since performance appraisal is widely used in ensuring productivity in many organizations in all African countries. The practice is most prevalent in South Africa and has gradually gained grounds in other African countries. Notable among African literature on performance appraisal are studies conducted by Price (1975) and AgyenimBoateng (2011) in Ghana, and Gould (1999) in Zaire (DRC). Price and Gould were both captured in a book written by Blunt and Popoola(2000).

Although Blunt and Popoola (2000) in their book “Personnel Management in Africa” captured the work of Price and Gould (1999), that performance appraisal has been defined differently by various writers. Significantly, the numerous definitions acknowledge that performance appraisal is not undertaken for its own sake. Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, Cardy, and Dimick (2000) succinctly stated that performance appraisal involves identification, measurement and management of human performance in organizations. Beach (2002) defines performance appraisal as the systematic evaluations of individuals with respect to their performance on the job and potential development.

However, Ivancevich and Glueck (2002) define performance appraisal as the systematic review of individual job’s relevant strengths and weaknesses through observations and judgement. They also define it as post control technique, which focuses on the extent to which employees have achieved expected levels of output during a specified time period. Pierce and Dunham (2004) define performance appraisal as a process of evaluating how effectively employees are fulfilling their job responsibilities and contributing to the accomplishment of organizational goals.

Similarly, Pearce and Robinson (2005) also stated that it is a process of determining how well someone is performing in their job and involves measuring performance and comparing it with an established standard. However, Watson (2005) contends that if appraisal is used to the level of accusations of inadequacies against job incumbents, it becomes an end in itself rather than a means. Lussier (2006) provides this missing link when he defined performance appraisal as an ongoing process of evaluating performance. This definition seeks to make occasional coaching, whereby a manager provides immediate feedback to subordinates based on casual observation, an integral part of the definition.

According to Kreitner (2006), performance appraisal is the process of evaluating job performance as a basis for making objective personnel decisions. Even though

Kreitner acknowledges the significance of occupational coaching, he deliberately excludes it from the definition because it is an informal activity. Mathis and Jackson (2007) define performance appraisal systems as attempts to monitor, measure, report, improve or expand employees' core capabilities. According to them, performance management is the limit between strategies and organizational goals.

The definitions of performance appraisals considered do not manifestly portray performance appraisal as a continuous activity. It is clear from the above definitions that performance appraisal is a process and therefore not a "one time" activity. Cuming (1994), Ubeku(1984) and Lussier (2006) have all identified four distinct stages in the appraisal process, namely job description and specification by the incumbent's immediate supervisor, setting of objectives by the job incumbent and his or her supervisor; completion of the appraisal form and the appraisal interview. It can be summarised from the foregoing that a performance appraisal system is a mechanism for periodic and routine evaluation of staff performance towards the attainment of various organizational goals.

### **Purpose of performance appraisal**

Below are some of the purposes of performance appraisal captured in the literature. Bottomley(2002) agrees with Ubeku (1984) on the fact that performance appraisal unearths future potentials. Bottomley (2002) further advises that performance appraisals must be separated from salary reviews. French (1987) exposes the other side of the appraisal process by explaining that appraisal identifies the strength and weaknesses of employees. It serves as a source of useful information pertaining to training and development needs of job holders. French (1987) further elaborates that the feedback mechanism considerably helps to improve communication between workers and management.

Performance appraisal, according Cuming (1994), can be helpful in planning job rotation. He contends that job rotations help in broadening the employee's experiences and identifying training needs of job incumbents. Byars and Rue (2000) state that appraisal does a number of things. It has the potential of encouraging performance improvement. The appraisal interview is also used to communicate strengths and weaknesses and to equally provide a platform for feedback and coaching by the supervisor, thereby leading to increased work effort by the subordinate. They have listed promotions and merit pay increases as some other uses of performance appraisal. In most cases, the appraisal results indicate the extent to which appraisees have met performance standards. Those found to have achieved expected standards may be rewarded with promotions or merit pay increases.

Bottomley (2002) states that appraisal is important in unearthing the future potential of the individual. Frequently, organizations use a particular appraisal instrument to achieve several incompatible objectives. For instance, an organization may use one appraisal instrument for merit pay increases as well as for identifying training and development needs. Graham (2004) contends that performance appraisal can motivate employees. He explains that providing employee an opportunity to discuss his or her performance with his or her superior can serve as a morale booster.

According to Kreitner (2006), 85.6 percent of managers of about 600 organizations in the USA questioned in a survey ranked compensation as the most important use of appraisals. The literature reveals that different organizations adopt different performance appraisal systems for different purposes. These surveys are a further proof of the multiplicity of uses that performance appraisals can be put to. Its significance, mostly, depends on what the user wants to achieve.



## **Frequency of appraisal**

There is no consensus on how often formal performance appraisals should be undertaken in an organization. Byars and Rue (2000), advocate that informal performance appraisals should be conducted two or three times annually in addition to formal appraisal in order to overcome forgetfulness, and thereby enhancing the usefulness and credibility of the informal appraisal system. Cascio (2002) and Byars and Rue (2000) have all urged organizations to conduct formal appraisals once or twice a year (Watson, 2005).

Cascio (2002) however, laments on the infrequency of formal appraisals and urges that it must be augmented with informal appraisal sessions. He contends that considering the fact that human resources are pivotal to the success of any organization, it will be suicidal to limit the appraisal period to just once annually. Employees need regular coaching to increase their work effort and performance.

In a similar view, Milkovich and Boudreau (2003) also acknowledge that most organizations undertake formal appraisals once a year. Kreitner (2006) reports that a study of some firms in the USA revealed that 90 percent of the firms surveyed conducted formal appraisals once a year. Milkovich and Boudreau ( as well as Kreitner (2006) advise that the supervisor should keep a diary recording all issues arising out of the informal appraisal sessions. In furtherance of this objective, the three writers mentioned above have urged that appraisals should be conducted after employers have accomplished important projects or tasks.

## **Characteristics of effective performance appraisal**

Performance appraisal forms are designed and administered to achieve organizational goals. In this regard, an effective performance appraisal must possess the

attributes of validity, reliability, acceptability, practicality and specificity (Cascio, 2002; Pearce & Robinson, 2005).

Validity is the extent to which a performance appraisal assesses all the relevant and only the relevant aspects of job performance. It is the extent to which performance on the measure is related to performance on the job. A measure must be reliable if it is to have any validity. On the other hand, we can reliably measure many characteristics that may have no relationship to whether someone can perform a job. For this reason, reliability is a necessary but insufficient condition for validity. Validity has to do with maximizing the overlap between actual job performance and the measure of job performance. A performance measure is deficient if it does not measure all aspects of performance. An example is a system of measure at a large university that assesses faculty members based more on research than teaching, thereby relatively ignoring a relevant aspect of performance aspects that are not job related (Raymond, Noe, John, Hollenbeck, Barry, 2007)

Reliability is the consistency of a performance measure or the degree to which a performance measure is free from random error. One important type of reliability is inter-rater reliability, that is, the consistency among the individuals who evaluate the employee's performance. A performance measure has inter-rater reliability if two individuals give the same evaluations of a person's job performance. Evidence seems to indicate that most subjective supervisory measures of job performance exhibit low reliability. In addition the measure should be reliable over time (test-retest reliability). A measure that results in drastically different rating depending on when the measures are taken lacks test-retest reliability. One needs to measure performance consistently across time (Price, 1975).

Acceptability is the extent to which a performance measure is deemed to be satisfactory or adequate by those who use it. It also refers to whether or not the people

who use a performance measure accept it. Many elaborate performance measures are extremely valid and reliable but they consume so much of manager's time that they refuse to use it. Alternatively, those being evaluated by the measure may not accept it. Acceptability is affected by the extent to which employees believe performance appraisal system is fair. Research suggests those performance appraisal systems that are perceived as unfair are likely to be legally challenged, be used incorrectly and decrease employee motivation to improve (Fletcher, 2001).

Specificity is the extent to which a performance measure gives detailed guidance to employees about what is expected of them and how they can meet those expectations. It is also the extent to which a performance measure tells employees what is expected of them and how they can meet those expectations. Specificity is relevant to both the strategic and development purposes of performance appraisal. If a measure does not specify what an employee must do to help the company achieve its strategic goals, it does not achieve its strategic purpose. Additionally, if the measure fails to point out employees' performance problems, it is almost impossible for the employees to correct their performance (Pearce & Robinson, 2005).

Practicality refers to the ability of managers to decide whether they have the capabilities and resources required to implement the alternatives, and they must be sure that the alternatives will not threaten the attainment of other organizational goals. At first glance an alternative might seem to be economically superior to other alternatives, but if managers realize that it is likely to threaten other important projects they might decide that it is not practical after all (Cascio, 2002).

Effective employee performance appraisal begins with a clear statement of organizational objectives without which, employee performance management will be isolated and irrelevant. The responsibility of each individual and the various groups must

optimally support the organization's goals (Byars & Rue, 2000). The appraisal system should be purposeful and in harmony with management's purpose for the programme. For example, if the primary objective of the appraisal is to determine promotions and merit increases, it would be out of place to urge supervisors to focus on personal growth and development of the employee during the performance review. It is important for every performance appraisal to be systematic, orderly and well defined in order to achieve valid results (Beach, 2002).

An appraisal system is not established for the sake of it. In the opinion of Mullins (1994), the appraisal system should be integrated with related personnel policies and practices such as human resource planning, training and development programmes. According to Cascio (2002), it should not be viewed in isolation, but in relation to the corporate objectives of the organization and designed to suit its culture and particular requirements. Like any other personnel programme, the appraisal system needs to be monitored regularly to ensure that assessment is carried out properly to provide adequate feedback to managers. The system needs constant review and where necessary, should be modified to suit changing environmental influences or the needs of the organization.

### **Approaches to measuring job performance**

Several different approaches are used in measuring performance, and they include trait-oriented appraisal instrument, behavioural-oriented appraisal instrument, outcome-oriented appraisal instrument and management by objectives (Lopez, 1968). Two other methods of appraisal identified by Lopez are person oriented and results-oriented.

The person oriented approach to performance appraisal attempts to define the personality that an employee must exhibit to be effective in the job. The various techniques define those personalities and then require managers to assess the extent to which

employees exhibit them (Pearce & Robinson, 1998). The results oriented approach focuses on managing the objective, measurable results of a job or work group. This approach assumes that subjectivity can be eliminated from the measurement process and that results are the closest indicator of one's contribution to organizational effectiveness. Two performance appraisal systems that use results oriented approach are management by objectives and the productivity measurement and evaluation systems.

Gomez-Mejia, Balklin, Cardy and Dimick (2000) have classified these into two broad techniques as judgmental (relative or absolute), and type of performance measure (that is trait, behaviour or outcome). Beach (2002) also identifies five approaches to appraisal namely comparison against standards, interpersonal comparisons, setting of goals, free-form essay, and direct performance measures. Kreitner (2006) identifies three basic approaches to performance appraisal as traits, behaviour and outcome-oriented approaches. Kreitner's classification conforms with the second category identified by Gomez-Mejia et al (2000).

The trait-oriented appraisal instrument measures the personal characteristics of the worker which tends to be consistent and more enduring (Kinicki,2003). Examples of traits include leadership, decisiveness, dependability, loyalty and honesty. A major drawback of this approach identified in the literature is its ambiguity. Besides, the lack of clear and precise definitions makes the approach legally indefensible. Despite the numerous problems associated with this approach, Kinicki (2003) still contends that traits are simply a shorthand way of describing a set of behavioural tendencies. Thus, trait judgment can have concrete behavioural basis that makes them less error-laden than critics suggest. The graphic rating scale is an example of a trait based appraisal instrument.

The behaviour – oriented appraisal instrument focuses on assessing a worker's specific and relevant job related behaviour. Its strength lies in the fact that it provides

concrete performance standards. It is thus more legally defensible. Behavioural scales are jointly developed by the worker and the supervisor and therefore have the potential of increasing the acceptability of the appraisal system. Another advantage of this instrument is that it provides specific feedback about an employee to a supervisor (Gomez-Mejia et al, 2000;Kreitner200;Byars&Rue, 2000). Its numerous strengths notwithstanding, it is not without problems. Byars and Rue (2000) as well as Gomez-Mejia et al (2000) have acknowledged the rather considerable amount of time and commitment required in its development.

Most famous of the behavioural-oriented systems is the behavioural anchored rating scales (BARS). It is used in assessing employee job relevant behaviours. Byars and Rue (2000) have outlined three basic steps in the development of BARS and these are identification of relevant job dimensions by managers and job incumbents, managers and job incumbents writing behavioural anchors for each dimension, managers and job incumbents reaching consensus concerning the scale values that are to be used and grouping of anchor statements for each scale value.

The outcome oriented appraisal instrument is used by supervisors to focus on actual results accomplished by workers. Measurement dimensions include amount of scales, production level and customers' satisfaction. The outcome approach has a number of advantages. According to Gomez-Mejia et al. (2000), it provides a clear and unambiguous criterion by which worker performance can be judged. It is also objective and therefore reduces the potential for error and bias. The most popular outcome approach is Management by Objectives (MBO).

Management by objective is a process involving the joint determination of performance objectives by both the supervisor and the employee for an impending appraisal. These goals must be sufficiently realistic and challenging. Provision is also

made for the supervisor and employee to update or alter the goals during the appraisal period if there is the need to do so. Brain child of Drucker (1954) Management by Objectives (MBO) has been adopted by a number of organizations. This method is based on quantitative, measurable or at least, concrete performance goals that are often set jointly by the supervisor and sub-ordinate. This method has the merit of ensuring that performance is measured against objective criteria giving the sub-ordinate the possibility to do that either by himself or jointly with his superiors (Carrell&Kuzmit, 1992; Owusu-Ansah, 1975).

Writers, including McConky (1967), sought to limit the use of MBO to specific fields. McConky (1967) is of the conviction that the process seems easier with production and marketing oriented companies but more difficult in service oriented companies. The advantages notwithstanding, the MBO approach has been criticised by writers. Byars and Rue (2000) on the other hand contended that it is commonly used with the professional and managerial employees. Levinson and Harry (2004) stated that the method is more challenging and difficult and demands a lot from managers. This approach also breaks down unless its participants and the managers are committed to making it work. Even though MBO is now widely used in the service sector, setting realistic objectives are no doubt a difficult task.

Nankervis (2002) also stated that in MBO, the results need to be quantifiable in both the long and short term. Thus, there is in-built mechanism for comparison. Where results are graphed, upward spikes in performance or uncharacteristic downturns can be seen in the context of output and performance. The different outcomes for particular tasks can be evaluated and management can assess employee's relative proficiencies in terms of these tasks. However, it can be difficult to implement MBO assessments in their ideal form because of the time frame logistics. Nankervis (2002) goes on to say staff making

assessments may move, as may staff being assessed; parameters, such as technology, or contingent human resources, or the physical environment may all make long term assessment impractical and wasteful.

The literature also mentions other performance measuring techniques. These include work standards approach, essay method, critical-incident method, check list method, forced-choice rating, and ranking methods. Cascio (2002) classifies all these as behaviour oriented rating methods. The classification is not so much an issue. What is significant is to appreciate the existence of several appraisal methods and to know when to apply each. The different categorizations notwithstanding, there seems to be unanimity in their description of the various methods and the uses to which they can be put. Some of the common appraisal methods in the literature are discussed below.

One of such methods is work standards which involves the setting of standards for employees on a particular job. The output of the worker is compared to an established average standard. The method is frequently used for production employees. With this method the job incumbent's performance can readily be ascertained since the standards are generally production related and easily quantifiable. Hence, it has the advantage of providing an objective assessment of the job incumbent. Its major disadvantage is that it does not enhance comparison among different categories of employees even though it is obvious that an employee's performance is partially dependent on the performance of other employees. (Byars& Rue, 2000; Carrell&Kuzmit, 1992).

The second is the narrative essay. Since the appraiser is required to give specific instances of performance, it reduces other errors due to halo effect, central tendency and leniency errors (Carrell&Kuzmit, 1992). The method requires the appraiser to write a narrative essay describing the appraisee's strengths and weaknesses, as well as suggestions for improvement (Cascio, 2002). It is, however, not without disadvantages. One such



disadvantage is that considerable amount of time is required to write essays for several employees since different essays emphasize different aspects of each worker's performance. It is, therefore, difficult to use essays for personnel decisions ( Byars& Rue, 2000; Cascio, 2002).

The third method is critical-incident method which requires the 'rater' to keep a record of behaviours of an employee indicating effective or ineffective performance in a small notebook. Such incidents form the basis for evaluating employee performance and also providing feedback to the employee and are therefore useful for developmental purposes. The critical incidents are used in formulating other appraisal types like the behavioural anchored scale (BARS). However, the problem with this method is that it requires the rater to note down incidents regularly. Obviously, this can be burdensome and time consuming. Furthermore, the awareness by employees that the supervisor is recording everything they do in a "little black book" (as some employees call this method) can result in friction between the 'rater' and the 'ratee' (Beach, 2002; Carrell& Kuzmit.1992).

The final method used is check list method. This may be weighted or unweighted. Usually, it contains a large number of statements which describe job related behaviours. The rater is required to "check" which statement best describes the ratee. The advantage with this method is that the raters are just describing the rates job related behaviours. Hence, they are not being evaluative. The method is also fairly fast and easy to use since it can produce mathematical totals for employees. Its major drawback, however, is that it is time consuming and expensive to develop (Beach, 2002; Carrell&Kuzmit 1992; Cascio, 2002).

In the example above, the statements are normally weighted. However, these weights are unknown to the rater but rather kept by the human resource department which

applies the weights to the ratings and ranking after the submission by the rater. One advantage of this method is that it insulates the rater against bias and, to an extent, enhances objectivity. The check- list method has a number of shortcomings. Firstly, the supervisor cannot provide feedback to the employee because he does not directly handle the evaluation. Secondly, the raters feel they are not trusted since they are not made aware of the weightings (Carrell&Kuzmit, 1992).

On the other hand, Byars and Rue (2000), as well as Casico (2002), have identified alternation ranking, paired comparison and forced distribution as an appraisal method. These classification differences do not in any way distort the basic facts. The substantive issue is that they are all forms of appraisal and the concern is with understanding their use and relevance as appraisal methods. The various ranking methods which are discussed below compel raters to differentiate among workers. They therefore aid raters to avoid committing errors of central tendency or leniency.

Simple ranking is a method whereby the rater is required to rank all employees from the highest to the lowest or alternatively from the best to the worse worker based on their contribution to the attainment of organizational goals (Garfield, 2007). Alternation ranking is a situation where the rater may initially list the names of all employees. After identifying the best and worst performing employees the rater examines the remaining names, and identifies the best and worst amongst them (Beach, 2002; Byars& Rue, 2000; Garfield, 2007).

In addition there is paired comparison, where Beach (2002) and Cascio (2002) contend that it is a very systematic method for comparing employees to each other usually in terms of an overall category. It requires that each rather be pitched against every other employee, a pair at a time. The rater then chooses the better of the pair. At the end of the exercise an employee's standing in the rank order depends on the number of time he or she

was rated superior. This method is useful for salary administration. It may however, be legally indefensible since it requires supervisors to rate their subordinates in the predetermined distribution. Supervisors are expected to place a certain percentage of employees at various performance levels. Thus, the distribution of the ratings is forced to conform to the normal distribution curve. On his part Lopez (1968), calls for an integrated approach in the use of the various appraisal techniques.

According to Beach (2002), the appropriateness of an appraisal system is dependent on its goals and objective. Milkovich and Boudreau (2003) contend that an appropriate method should be tailored to suit its purpose. The discussion of the various appraisal methods has revealed that there is not a single method which is foolproof (Cascio, 2002). Obviously, each has some merits and can therefore, be very purposeful. Byars and Rue (2000) expressed a similar opinion and further advocated that an organization must conduct job analysis and develop job descriptions to enable it select a suitable appraisal method. Sherman, Bohlander and Chrudeen (1998) cautioned that the easiest and least expensive techniques are also the least accurate. Consequently, they have advocated for the use of more reliable but complex and time consuming method.

### **Evaluators of performance appraisal**

According to Edwards and Ewen (1996), it is an extraordinarily effective tool for change since “no organizational action has more power for motivating employee behaviour change than feedback from credible work associates”(Page 119). In the opinion of Milkovich and Boudreau (2003), there are several possible evaluators. Milkovich and Boudreau contend that the most effective appraisers should have the opportunity to observe the appraisee’s job over a reasonable period of time, and should be able to translate the observation into useful assessment. They should also have appropriate motivation so that

useful performance appraisal results can be obtained. Qualified evaluators include high level managers, immediate supervisors or managers, peers, customers/ or clients, independent outside observers, subordinates, self-appraisal and use of computers.

Fletcher (2004), stated that the ratings are usually collated by an external or by an internal human resource department. A feedback report is prepared for the “target” manager that include the average ratings awarded from each group and how these relate to the manager’s own self-assessment. The 360-degree feedback gives employees and teams a clear understanding of personal strengths and areas of development. Employees view feedback from multiple perspectives as fair, accurate, believable and motivational. The flexibility of the process makes it meaningful for people at all levels – in union and non-union environments. The process also enhances the effectiveness of diversity management, team bases, work structures, total quality management and other broad initiatives.

Edwards and Ewen (1996) observe that 360-degree feedback is a highly sensitive process that can easily fail if it is not managed well. Fletcher (2004) noted that the widespread adoption and use of such systems in the sharper context of appraisal does raise some questions about their usefulness in practice. Organizations either produce their own 360-degree systems or buy them from one of the numerous consultancies. These consultancies usually display an alarming degree of ignorance about what the systems actually deliver. An examination conducted showed that questionnaire items did not relate to the competencies they were supposed to measure. The ratings given even by bosses did not correlate with other performance measures for the target managers concerned. As a result of these dangers, Fletcher warns that organizations should be careful with 360-degree feedback systems.

## **Problems associated with the management of performance appraisal systems**

The effectiveness of any appraisal system depends on the quality and reliability of assessment. By looking at the various appraisal methods a number of problems which hamper the effectiveness of the appraisal process could be identified. According to Ivancevich (2002), most employees are wary of performance appraisal. Perhaps the most common fear is that of rater subjectivity. Introducing subjective bias and favouritism are real problems that create opposition to most performance appraisal systems. Being mainly a human activity, appraisal cannot be entirely devoid of subjective judgments. Coupled with the frailties of human memory these contribute in creating some appraisal errors although. These errors can be reduced or eliminated through training. The common appraisal errors include halo effect, leniency and central tendency errors (Beach, 2002).

Halo effect is the situation where an appraiser may be influenced by the performance of an appraisee on a single dimension and consequently transfer this to other aspects of performance. Leniency error arises when a supervisor tends to assign high scores to all employees even though they might be low performing employees. Severity or strictness error occurs when a supervisor consistently gives low ratings. Central tendency error occurs when most employees are given an average appraisal. Personal bias of a supervisor may consciously or unconsciously rate an employee higher or lower. Such biases are unrelated to job performance but may be due to factors such as age, sex, ethnicity or religion. Recency error occurs when supervisors use only activities that occurred just before the appraisal to evaluate the employee (Mathis & Jackson, 1991).

### **Eliminating rater errors**

Most managers rely on employee performance in the period immediately preceding the performance evaluation deadline. Unfortunately, they do not weigh performance from

the whole year (or quarter, if their organizations use a quarterly review system.) Some employees exploit this behaviour by slacking-off during most of the year and shaping-up in the weeks before a performance evaluation is due. A log or a diary will help managers record employee projects and behaviours in one location. Clearly, recording significant and relevant examples of employee performance helps managers write objective performance summaries (Straub, 2000).

The lack of improvement in the accuracy of ratings by focusing on changing the format of rating scales has led researchers to concentrate more on the rating process. In other words, many attempts to improve the accuracy of performance evaluations now focus on the rater's (appraiser's) ability to observe, recall, and report subordinate behaviour. In this newer tradition, raters do seem more accurate when they are asked to evaluate specific aspects of an employee's performance as opposed to providing an overall evaluation. In addition, diary keeping also seems to improve their rating accuracy (Thompson & Strickland, 2001).

According to Ivancevich (2002), one method for dealing with errors has been to change the format of the rating scales that supervisors are asked to complete. The trend has been to move from graphic rating scales with ambiguous anchors (fair, poor, excellent) to behaviourally oriented scales with well defined anchors. After years of research, however, there is no clear superiority of newer rating formats. Ivancevich (2002), is of the view that approach to improving performance appraisal is to train raters to become more effective users of the organization's performance appraisal system. The two most popular types of training programmes designed to eliminate common rating errors are observation and recording skills. The programmes that focused on observation and recording skills may offer greater improvements in accuracy than those that simply focus on errors.

Recording events in a diary every week, however, becomes overwhelming when employees have not been seen. Instead, each employee should be asked to keep a diary of his/her achievements, for review on weekly basis. When a performance evaluation is due, the appraiser should study the employee's diary along with any notes from the weekly meetings. With this, there would not be the need to dig through files or seek reports from various sources. By this data might have been accumulated for all that is needed in one place to help in preparing for an effective performance evaluation statement and discussion (Bourne, 2006).

According to Watson (2005), it is very necessary to keep appraisal log is very important as it serves a number of purposes. The manager can record successes or performance that requires improvement. When it comes to complete the appraisal, the manager has a historical record of events and will not have to rely on recent memory. This documentation can be used to support and track future progress of the employee. In carrying out any appraisal at a given point in time, the recordings for a period of time should be compared over the past six months or against the last appraisal.

### **The appraisal interview**

Ubeku (1984) suggests that separate appraisal interviews should be conducted for the various appraisals with different objectives. The lack of experience in handling appraisal interviews by raters has also been identified as a major drawback to the appraisal interview. The inability of the rater to get the ratee to discuss the appraisal dispassionately could defeat the entire purpose of the interview. It is therefore, advocated that organizations should train their appraisers on how to effectively communicate appraisal results to appraisee's, how to complete appraisal forms, how to recognise good performance and how to avoid making rating errors.

Some other authors, like Ivancevich and Glueck (2002), have referred to the appraisal interview as feedback interview. The literature indicates that the appraisal interview takes place after the appraisal form has been completed. The appraisal interview is therefore to communicate results of the appraisal to the appraisee concerned. According to Bourne (2006), appraisal interviews differ from selection or disciplinary interviews principally because they should provide no cause for surprise, no new information, and no real show of formal authority.

The usefulness of appraisal interviews is aptly captured by French (1987). The appraisal interview may have one or more purposes, such as those encouraging present behaviour, changing communicating result of salary or promotion decisions. Even though several authors attest to the usefulness of appraisal interview considerable doubt have been raised regarding effectiveness. Some appraisals have multiple objectives which might in fact be incompatible.

Kreitner and Kinicki (1995) noted that appraisals are in practice one-sided, without participation from the subordinates. They therefore suggested that subordinates should be trained and equipped with skills to enable them to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and improve their communication skills.

## **Summary**

The appropriateness of appraisal can be said to be dependent on the goals and objectives of the organization. It has also been established that there is no one foolproof method of carrying out appraisals, and the way and manner it is done varies from one organization to the other. A good and appropriate job description helps in selecting a suitable method of appraisal. All appraisal methods are not without problems. One such problem is error, and most of the errors can be eliminated through training. Examples of



errors in appraisal methods discussed in the literature are halo effect, leniency, central tendency and recency error.

In conclusion, a performance appraisal system is important to employees' professional development, in meeting the company's or firm's goals or objectives and, ultimately, in contributing to the company's or firms bottom line. No employer, whether a small CPA firm, a Big firm, a non-profit organization, a government institution or a private or public company, should be exempted from having a formal performance appraisal system in place. Other benefits that could be derived from having a performance appraisal programme include enhanced communications, and the opportunity to effectively address performance problems, and improved employee and employer's relationship.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

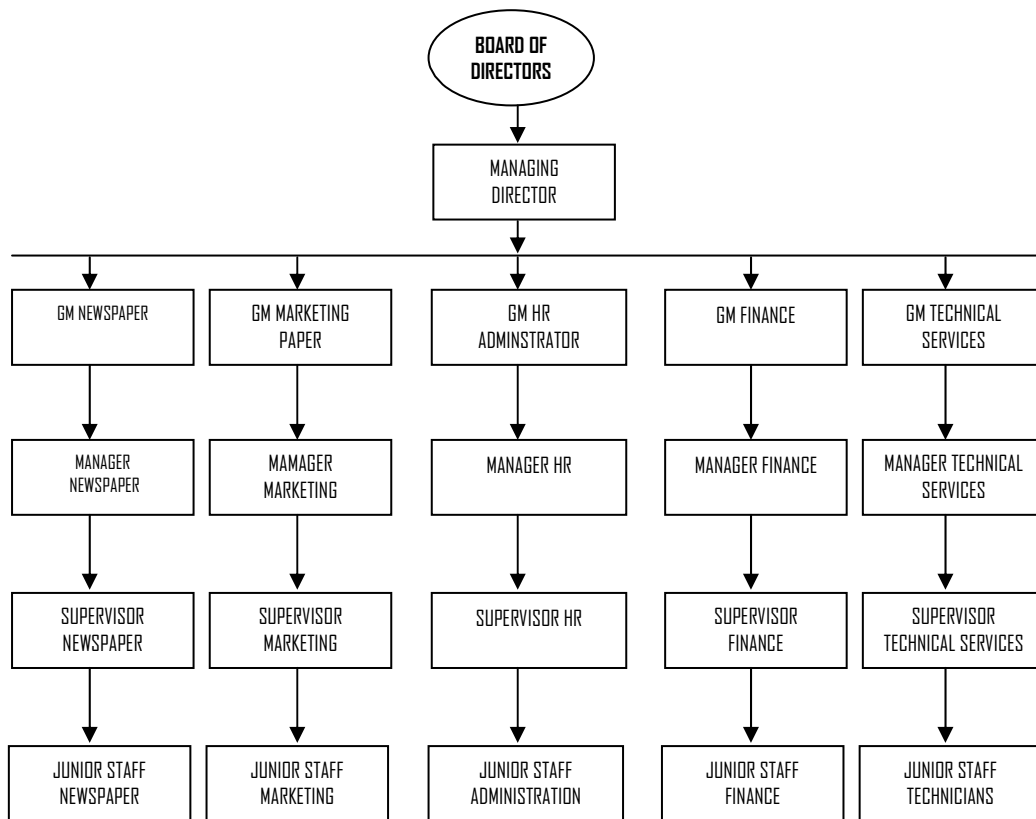
### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents details of how the study was conducted. It focuses on the study organization, the research design, the population, sample selection and how data was collected and analyzed.

#### **Study organization**

The organizational chart of GCGL is a complex one that consists of the Board of Directors, followed by the Managing Director, the Executive Management Staff, followed by Management staff and Senior Management staff before the junior staff in that order. The Board of Directors set the corporation's directive policies and direction, and is empowered to elect and appoint officers and agents to act on behalf of the corporation. The Board is ultimately responsible for the actions of the corporation. The Managing Director (MD) designs, develops and implements the strategic plan for the Group in the most cost-effective and time efficient manner. This is illustrated in the organizational structure of GCGL (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Organizational chart of GCGL**

Source: Graphic Com. Group. Ltd 2010

The Managing Director is responsible for both the day-to-day running of the organization and for developing business plans for the long term future of the organization. The Managing Director at GCGL manages everything, including staff, customers, budget, company assets and all other company resources to make the best use of them and increase the company's profitability. The general management staffs of GCGL are responsible for one functional area of their specialisation. In GCGL, duties of a General Manager include hiring and management of a management team, overall management of staff, budgeting and financial management, creating and enforcing business objectives and goals, managing projects, management of emergencies and other major issues involving employees, or the facility, and many additional duties.

Managers at GCGL perform duties such as effective and efficient coordination of the work of others. Planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling, and directing. Every organization includes people, and a manager's job is to work with and through people to accomplish aims. Senior Staff are responsible for supervising the junior staff in the discharge of their duties in the organization. They make sure that all the directives given by those above them are carried out by the people they supervise. When there is poor performance, the senior staff (supervisor) normally consults with the HR Manager regarding coaching for improved performance.

### **Study design**

The study utilised a cross-sectional approach by which random sampling of respondents was made from all eleven (11) departments. This allowed data to be collected once, allowing for the study of the process of the performance appraisal in the organization as recommended by Mitchell and Jollet (2003). The cross-sectional design was employed to enable views of various categories of staff related to the study to be gathered and assessed at a point in time. According to Osuala (2004), the cross-sectional study is applied in the study of a particular phenomenon at a particular time. In the study under consideration is performance appraisal. The cross-sectional study often employs the survey strategy which seeks to describe the incidence of a phenomenon such as performance appraisal by the use of qualitative methods since many case studies are based on interviews constructed over a short period.

### **Population**

The target selected population for the study consisted of 446 employees, including executive management, management, senior and junior staff. For the purpose of the study

objective, the target population of 446 employees (Table1) were taken as one group and as such a random sampling method was employed.

**Table 1:Staff of Graphic Communication Group Limited**

Level	Male	Female	Total
General Management	5	2	7
Management	10	8	18
Supervisors	78	25	103
Junior Staff	225	66	318
Total	345	101	446

Source: Field study 2008

### **Sample selection**

According to Kumekpor (2002), a sample size from a population of 446 should be 205. This determination is based on a formula which allows for five percent error margin in the social sciences. This assumes the proportion (P) of 0.5 which yields the largest possible sample size. The determined sample size was 205 according to Kumekpor (2002). Based upon the staff list as a sampling frame, the lottery method was used to select 205 staff who were then given questionnaires to fill. After persistent calls and regular visits over several months, 54 questionnaires were retrieved. The return rate was 26 percent. According to ([www.statpac.com/statistics-calculator/sampling.htm](http://www.statpac.com/statistics-calculator/sampling.htm) March 23, 2010 10am GMT) typically, in social science research, you would be willing to accept a difference of 5 percent as a result the actual rate in the population may be between 20 and 30 percent and this is acceptable in social research.

### **Methods of data collection**

Data were collected from two main sources, namely primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources consisted of internal reports and files that were made available by the Human Resource Manager and literature from the organization's library. In addition, existing records over an extended period of time (1998-2008) were gathered and reviewed. This was to enable the researcher to ascertain the trend of the phenomenon and the reasons employees gave as their opinion about performance appraisal in the organization. Primary data were sought directly from the employees and managers of the company. Two hundred and five (205) questionnaires were given out and 54 were retrieved. The study thus proceeded with data from 54 respondents and from examination of internal company documents.

### **Instruments for data collection**

Questionnaires were administered to gather primary data. In this study, the questionnaire was the major data collection tool. The interview was used to probe further where necessary, or when there were unclear responses on the questionnaire. The head of training and the HR manager in charge of administration were the respondents who were interviewed. The reason for this combination was to give opportunity to respondents to express their own views on questions that were considered too sensitive to elicit the correct responses. It was also to help get responses to unanswered items on the questionnaire. Thus, these instruments were used to collect the requisite data for the analysis of the study.

The questionnaire consisted of five sections. The first section covered the background of respondents. The next section sought to examine the existing performance appraisal system at the organization, which is in line with the first objective. This is followed by a section that dealt with the effectiveness of appraisal process that is objective

two. The last section looked at areas where improvement is needed in the performance appraisal process. The section also attempted to suggest ways of improving the PA system at the organization. The questionnaire made use mostly of closed-ended items and a few open-ended ones.

Closed-ended items enabled the study to elicit specific responses. Close-ended items were relatively easy to answer even though they narrowed the scope of possible answers to an item. Nevertheless, close-ended items provided a greater uniformity of responses and also permit easier summary and analysis. The closed-ended items included a four (4) point Likert scale with the aim that the respondents would choose a number from the scale which identified their level of agreement. By contrast, the open-ended items allowed the respondents to provide their own answers in their own words, and also provided reasons for a particular choice. On the questionnaire, respondents were assured that their responses to the questions would be kept confidential, and used solely for academic purposes.

### **Ethical consideration**

The respondents were informed ahead of time after permission was sought from management before the actual instrument administration. The rights of the respondents were respected in the course of data collection by assurances of confidentiality and privacy of information given during the exercise. Permission was sought from the Human Resource Management team and they co-operated in any way they could to make this research a success. Several visits were made before some of the employees gave out the information, nonetheless others were so helpful.

### **Field work**

The data collection began in March 2008 and ended in August 2008. Thus, it took about six months to gather the entire data and administer the questionnaires. Frequent appearance at the offices of most workers motivated some of the workers to fill the questionnaire. The fifty four (54) retrieved questionnaires were recovered from three (3) managers, fourteen (14) senior staff members and thirty seven (37) junior staff.

### **Field challenges**

The data collection was difficult as people were reluctant to accept the questionnaire because they were not sure of the consequences of giving objective responses though they had been assured that the study was for academic purposes. Most of the respondents selected kept going on field trips, whilst others went on leave and all these instances delayed the collection of data. In spite of the fact that the questionnaires were personally distributed to respondents, many failed to complete the questionnaires. The reasons given were that recommendations that would be made would not change anything in the organization so it would be a waste of time to respond to the questionnaires. For this reason, persistence was used for the respondents to co-operate. They were frequently visited and those who were reached on phone could sometimes be reached only at unsociable hours. Some of the field challenges encountered were that since the researcher was not working in the organization many of the staff did not co-operate.

### **Data analysis**

The questionnaires retrieved were cleaned, edited and coded. They were then processed using tools from the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) (version 16) software to generate descriptive statistics. The data collected were grouped into frequencies and expressed in percentages tables and figures to describe the data. The



analysis was carried out in a way that suppressed unnecessary details without losing important findings. The basic concern was to use the answers from the research questions to explain current state of affairs regarding performance appraisal in the organization. Information from secondary sources were also utilised to bring out management's perspective and to inform discussions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher presents the results of the study. The results cover issues relating to performance appraisal in Graphic Communications Group Limited. The chapter was presented according to the specific objectives. These include examining the existing performance appraisal system of the Graphic Communications Group, determining the effectiveness of the current appraisal system in the Graphic Communications Group Limited and exploring areas of performance appraisal where improvement is needed.

#### **Background characteristics of respondents**

The issues investigated under this segment include age of respondents, sex, marital status and number of dependants, departments of respondents, qualification and number of years experience in appraisals. The purpose of investigating the respondent's background

was to examine the appraisal experiences acquired, which was likely to have influence on the job performance of employees.

The survey revealed that the oldest respondent was 54 years while the youngest at the time of the study was 22. The mean age was 28 years which indicated that the company’s employee constituted a youthful group who had more years to stay on the job. With time, they would acquire the needed experience that helps to boost performance appraisal. The breakdown of the age distribution of the respondents is as follows. There were 23 respondents between the ages of 20 and 29 followed by those between the ages of 30 and 39 (30%). The details are presented in Table 2. This is an indication that a large number of the employees in the study organization were young.

**Table 2:Age distribution of respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	23	43.0
30-39	16	30.0
40-49	8	15.2
50 & above	7	11.8
Total	54	100.0

Source: Field study 2008

This finding is important to the study because youthful workers do not have sufficient experiences with performance appraisal in order to perform to expected standard measures(Adansi, 1989).With regard to sex, 70 percent of the employees were males while 30 percent were females. In terms of marital status, 68 percent were married while 24 percent were single. The other 8 percent were either separated or widowed. The survey

further revealed that the maximum family size was twelve (12) persons and the minimum two (2).

Majority of respondents (51.9%) stated that they had served over eight years in the company (Table 3). Respondents who had served between four and seven years (9.3%) constitute the minority. There were other employees (38.8%), who had worked between 1 and 3 years. These persons' knowledge of performance appraisal is negligible and cannot really be considered substantial as far as performance appraisal in the organization is concerned. For most of the employees this was their first employment. For an effective performance appraisal to be carried out some level of experience in performance appraisal is needed by the appraisee. (Sahl,1990).

**Table 3: Working experience of employees**

Number of years of work	Frequency	Percentage
1-3	21	38.8
4-7	5	9.3
8 and above	28	51.9
Total	54	100

Source: Field study, 2008

The researcher was interested in knowing the various identifiable departments in the organization. This was necessary in order to comprehend the nature of the organization and job tasks. Eleven separate departments were identified by the researcher as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Departments of respondents**

Department	Frequency	Percentage
Engineering	17	31
Technical services	1	2
Advert & business development unit	2	4
Marketing & public affairs	2	4
Human resource	2	4
Audit	4	7
Finance	2	4
Packaging	3	6
Process	1	2
Editorial	18	32
Proofreading	2	4
Total	54	100

Source: Field study, 2008

It is evident from Table 4 that quite a good number of the respondents were from the Editorial Department (32%), followed by Engineering department (31%). The departments with the least representation were that of the Technical Services and Processing Department.

According to Thomas (1992), employees in the age group of 20 and 24 are likely to change their jobs 6.6 times during their life time. Given that majority of employees 43%

being in this age group, it is likely that after a period, all these people would move on, as indicated by Nankervis et al.(2002), and the cycle has to start all over again.

Majority of the employees (70%) were male which is an indication that the rate of change would not be as rapid as it would have been if women were in majority. Adansi (1989) stated that females are more susceptible to turn over than their male counterparts. To ascertain this fact cross tabulation on the impact of working experience and age on analysis has been done to see if there is any relationship between the two variables.

**Table 5: Cross tabulation working experience and age**

Length of Service in yrs	N	%	Age	N	%
1-3 years	21	39	20-39 years	39	73
4-7 years	5	10	40-49years	8	16
8 & above	28	51	50 & above	7	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field study 2008

As illustrated in Table 5, 21(38.8%) respondents served the company for 1-3 years. While five (9.3%) respondents served in the Company between 4-7 years. Additionally, 51.9 percent of them served the company for eight years and above. In the table, young employees with fewer years of experience in the organization and who could easily move on to another job (Adansi, 1989) were in the majority (73%). However the elderly often would not want to change job as expressed by(March & Simon 1958) because of their age formed only 11.2 percent.The implication of this trend on the company means that if management do not put in structures to change the current trend the organization could be become a training ground for employees who work a few years, gain experience and move on.

## **Existing performance appraisal system at GCGL**

This section deals with the first objective of the study. A brief introduction to the existing performance appraisal system at Graphic Communication Group Limited was the first objective of the study. Issues discussed under this section of the research centre around the performance appraisal system at GCGL as it exists currently.

At Graphic Communication Group Limited (GCGL) objectives for appraisal were for administrative purposes. The objectives were to review an employee's performance and assist him/ her to improve upon job delivery. Work objectives for the following year were set in order to discuss the employee's future development and training requirements and to assess suitability for promotion. The system of performance appraisal carried out at the GCGL was formal and it was held annually. As recommended by Milkovich and Boudreau (2003), most organizations undertake formal appraisals once a year focusing on job delivery, personal qualities, employee's growth and development among others. The system was trait based, behaviour based and result oriented. It was conducted using the bottom up approach.

An interview granted by one of the human resource managers at GCGL revealed that whenever appraisals were carried out and merit rating were done, most of the employees disagreed with their ratings. This occasional occurrence breeds rancour which should not be allowed to continue as it developed unhealthy relationships. This situation is not the best for peaceful co-existence since it can escalate to industrial unrest.

At the GCGL when junior staff were being assessed an appraisal form is filled after which the superior rated the appraisee independently and invited him/her later to confirm or refute the reports. This type of appraisal was advocated by Byars and Rue (2000) who are of the view that appraisals are used to communicate strength and weaknesses and to

provide a platform for feedback and coaching by the supervisor thereby leading to increased work effort by subordinates. Where the employee disagrees with the appraiser, the employee states his / her view on the same form and the appraiser submits it to the human resource manager.

With regards to the senior staff, the job holder analyzed his / her performance over the past year, highlighting objectives that had been achieved and what objectives should be adopted for the following year. The completed assessment document was then used to guide and steer discussions between the line manager and the superior. Graham (2004) explains that providing the employee an opportunity to discuss his or her performance with the superior can serve as a morale booster. At the end of the day good performance is highlighted since priority is on results and not entirely on personalities. Goals and critical plans are discussed and where the officer has any issue regarding management style, the subject is broached, re-assurance given and anxieties dispelled.

Policy on performance appraisal systems at GCGL is discussed as follows. Formulated in 2004 the policy was the underlying philosophy of the company's performance appraisal systems (PAS). It helps identify and assess the appropriate training needs of staff, pay equitable compensation to engender healthy competition among staff, and ensure increased productivity. The policy defines PA as follows: 'It is the process of determining the contribution of individuals (and teams) to the achievements of corporate goals through the assessment of individuals result against prior, agreed objectives and standards'. (August 2004, page 8)

It is a proactive management tool for achieving corporate goals through the process of continuous improvement in individual and team performance, utilising a shared set of values, beliefs and vision for the future. This part of the policy is in line with what Pearce and Robinson (2005) said in their book, that performance appraisal involves measuring

performance and comparing it with standard. Pearce and Dunham (2004) also describe performance appraisal as employees fulfilling their job responsibility and contributing to the accomplishment of organizational goals.

The aim of the policy is to ensure future strength of the organization which depends on a cadre of competent and effective workers, comprehensive and reliable information on the performance and potential of each worker required. The fact that great emphasis is placed on the self-development of appraisees means that they also need information which will enable them to achieve this objective. The main elements of the policy towards the company can be summarised as focus on career development, award salary increases, assessment of the effectiveness of the selection process, awareness of obstacles to better performance, and assessing the training needs of individuals. The main elements in the policy can be linked to French (1987) who states that PA can serve as a source of useful information pertaining to the training and development needs of job holders.

A benefit of the policy towards the individual is for them to understand what contribution is expected of them towards the growth and development of the organization's objective standards. This will help them to evaluate and improve personal performance and effectiveness, guidance for self-development, and to know about personal prospects. The policy's aim for performance appraisal that demands directly that appraisers should be honest and courageous conforms with Gomez Mejia (2000), who identify the success of performance appraisal system with leadership traits like decisiveness, dependability, loyalty and honesty.

In addition to the above, the policy attempts to examine what else is expected from the appraisal system. The appraisal system improves the performance at individuals, teams and businesses and ultimately service delivery. It also motivates, develops and releases people's potential, allowing them to exhibit exceptional levels of performance with little or



no supervision. Furthermore it enables appraisees to develop behaviours that are consistent with exceptional performance. According to the policy, the responsibilities for performance appraisal rest with all those who are directly responsible for the performance of others are to be honest and courageous. It should be noted that the performance or effectiveness of a manager as an appraiser and counsellor will be taken into account in his/her own appraisal.

The policy stated that a good performance appraisal system invariably takes time to develop and requirements include much management attention at all levels. In the end performance appraisal systems embrace the following stages: performance planning, performance support and performance review (the appraisal Interview). It follows from the main stages that the three key aspects of effective performance are performance planning performance support and performance review. The policy looked at the objective setting in planning performance, objective setting being a process that involves both defining and measuring performance. It is a two-way process that includes top-down input on overall corporate objectives as well as bottom-up views on what individuals can accomplish. Trust and openness in this process enhance the quality and strength of objectives and also help to generate ownership.

This aspect of the policy which looked at objective setting and a two way process that included top down input conforms to MBO by Drucker(1954) when concrete performance goals are often set jointly by the supervisor and subordinate both work together closely towards the attainment of the goals. In relation to the quantity of objectives, the policy urges, objectives to be thought through and worded carefully. A useful guide to follow is SMART: (Specific, Measurable, Achievable (Attainable, Action Oriented) Realistic, and Time Bound. While the appraisee works to achieve the objectives agreed, the manager (appraiser) retains a key enabling role. This involves having a clear

focus and communication, organising the resource and off job training, being accessible and giving opportunities to succeed and addressing unforeseen barriers to agreed performance.

According to the policy, performance appraisal is done in two distinct ways. These are on-going review (usually informal) and formal end of period review/feedback. Formal end of period review/feedback is the formal assessment by the appraiser of an appraisee's performance, based on the information the appraiser and the appraisee have gathered throughout the year. It is about looking at what went well or not so well, that is, measuring or assessing objectives.

It is about giving developmental evidence-based feedback to people on their performance. On receiving feedback, the policy uses a simple model of ask encourage and welcome it. 'Listen' without interruption, 'Clarify' to avoid misinterpretation 'Challenge' if appropriate, 'Thank' the person. This is consistent with Byars and Rue's (2000) view that appraisal is used to communicate strength and weakness and to equally provide feedback.

Performance appraisal records which are kept as forms, serve as reference during interviews as they indicated the extent the programme had been achieved, the strength and weakness in the performance, the major factors influencing the appraisee's performance, the appraisee's short-term career prospects. Frequency of performance appraisal, according to the policy performance appraisal records should normally be prepared and discussed every year to determine the level of the appraisee's performance, his strengths and weaknesses, and of his need for any special training or developmental experience.

Accordingly, it can be said that appraisal at Graphic Communication Group Limited is quite comprehensive, covering a wide spectrum of issues. For all level of employees, issues on personal information, performance competencies, strength and need

analysis, training and development activities to be undertaken within the year, appraisers assessment, appraisees comment are all assessed. There is a column on both forms marked HR use only, where the scores are collated and appraisees are rated.

### **Effectiveness of performance appraisal system at GCGL**

This section addresses the second research question which was the evaluation of the effectiveness of performance appraisal at GCGL. To test the effectiveness of performance appraisal there was the need to look at the appraisal process of the organization which comprises the pre-appraisal activities, the appraisal itself and post appraisal activities. Issues discussed under the topics mentioned above were, indicators of effectiveness, pre-appraisal conference, preparation towards staff appraisal, key roles expected from employees regarding appraisal, collection of quality appraisal data, appraisal interview, training need assessment and variety of forms of assistance offered to employee after the exercise and post appraisal processes.

Certain indicators were used in determining the effectiveness of performance appraisal system. These indicators included setting quality performance standards, conducting performance appraisal review interview, using performance appraisal result, eliminating adverse impact. A good appraisal process ensures that all employees doing similar job are evaluated according to the same standards, and specific forms should be designed for specific departments and requirements Bourne (2006), a system which was absent in GCGL. Only two categories of appraisal forms were used, at GCGL that is junior staff appraisal and senior staff appraisal forms.

The views of employee's on performance appraisal process in the organization were examined. The issues under review were employees' views on pre-appraisal conference. Before the appraiser and appraisee embarked on this important exercise there is the need to check on what the appraisee is doing and hold some discussions with regards

to the process. According to Narvile (1992), job performance should be discussed/checked prior to performance appraisal. He recommends that the specification for job performance should not have been changed contrary to directives that were issued which can affect or influence the subordinate's work.

**Table 6: Pre-appraisal conference**

Activity	Percent
Do not carry out any preparation towards the appraisal	27
Do not keep appraisal diaries on worker performance	24
Conduct appraisal interview	21
Follow up to assist workers to improve professional competence	28
Total	100

Source: Field study, 2008                      N = 54

A few of the respondents (27%) indicated that there was preparation towards the performance appraisal exercise (Table 6). The findings contrast with the literature of Cuming and Schwab(1978). Cuming and Schwab stated that before the appraiser and appraisee embark on this important exercise, they should be made aware that performance appraisals differ from selection or disciplinary interviews principally because they should provide no cause for surprise, no new information, and no real show of formal authority.

A question was asked to ascertain the keeping of diaries and 24 percent of the respondents stated that no appraisal diaries were kept on worker performance. This finding contradicts, what is discussed in <http://www.rightattitudes.com/> (2006) concerning the importance of diary keeping. The site indicated that it is very necessary to keep appraisal diaries, so that in future the progress of the employee can be compared against standards.

In carrying out any appraisal at a given point in time, the results should be compared over the past six months or against the last appraisal.

The findings also indicated that 28 percent of employees stated that there was follow up to assist workers to improve their professional competence. This is consistent with the literature. According to Armstrong (2001), positive follow up and knowledge of results is an important way of ensuring that performance appraisal had taken place. To be effective, follow up should focus on specific behaviours and should come as soon as possible after appraisals. Twenty one percent of the employees interviewed stated that appraisal interviews were conducted. The low percentage (21%) was inconsistent with literature as indicated by Bourne (2006).

For an effective performance appraisal process individuals are expected to be aware of their respective roles in the process and adequately prepare towards the exercise. The roles played by respondents in the appraisal process are given in Table 7.

**Table 7: Key roles expected from respondents regarding appraisal**

Activities /Roles		Responses		
Yes (%)	No (%)	Total		
Conduct pre-appraisal conference	27.3	72.7	100	
Self appraisal	27.3	72.7	100	
Keeping appraisal diaries	23.6	76.4	100	
Conduct appraisal interview	30.9	69.1	100	
Follow up to assist workers	38.2	61.8	100	

Source: Field study, 2008

N = 54

Preparation towards staff appraisal entails the conduct of pre-appraisal conference, self appraisal and keeping appraisal diaries. This step also includes the appraisal interview and follow-up to assist workers. According to Keeley (1978), all this are necessary for

achievement of good results. As indicated in (Table 6), 72.7 percent of the respondents stated that there was no pre-appraisal conference, while 27.3 percent affirmed that pre-appraisal conference occurred.

With respect to self appraisal, majority (72.7%) indicated that there was no such thing. This finding contradicts what Cascio (2002) advises. According to him, it is important for organizations to encourage self- appraisal at a point in the working time of employees in order to reduce defensiveness during appraisal interviews. Though the method is perceived to be subjective because appraisees may allocate to themselves higher evaluations scores than supervisors, it is believed that it would enable employees do self - examination of their weaknesses and strengths. A minority (27.3%) of respondents stated that they went through self appraisal.

Keeping appraisal diaries is very necessary because it enables future progress of the employee to be compared against standards. In carrying out any appraisal at a given point in time, the results should be compared to those obtained over the past six months or against the last appraisal. The writer on the web site <http://www.rightattitudes.com/> (2006) comes out with the following reasons for making notes during performance appraisals. The site states that whilst some notes will be made during the appraisal others will be made at its conclusion. These notes will enable the appraiser to decide as to the next course of action to help the subordinate resolve his problems before the next meeting.

Milkovich and Boudreau (2003) advised that the supervisor should keep a diary in which he or she records all issues arising out of the informal appraisal sessions. In furtherance of this objective, they have urged that appraisals be conducted after employees who have accomplished important projects or tasks. In the survey, 23.6 percent of respondents agreed that performance appraisal diaries were kept in the organization to

track performance of employees, while the majority (76.4%) said no diaries were kept for the purpose of tracking the record of the appraisees.

With regards to conducting performance appraisal interviews, Burke and Kimball (1971) state that appraisal interviews are different from selection or disciplinary interviews. The assessment and analysis should be fully discussed with the view to resetting standards for the next period based partly on experience gained from the previous one. The appraisee must be allowed to raise any matters of concern that he/she may have about the job, the future, the company, other people and any other issues that are applicable. The majority of respondents (69.1%) attested to the practice of carrying out appraisal interviews in the organization. On the other hand, 30.9 percent claim they had no idea of the fact that appraisal interviews were held at Graphic Communication Group Limited.

The last issue raised in the Table is the follow up to assist workers. The importance of feedback cannot be overemphasised in performance appraisal. Feedback means giving people information on how they are doing. Armstrong (2001) opines that positive feedback and knowledge of results is an important way of ensuring that performance appraisal has taken place. To be effective, feedback should focus on specific behaviours and be provided as soon as possible after appraisals. Also, positive appraisal results should be verbally praised or reinforced. A minority of respondents (38.2%) stated that they were followed ups and assisted after the appraisal. Majority (61.8%) did not receive any form of follow up assistance or feedback.

The results notonly pointed to good practices in the organization but also gave credence to the fact that performance appraisal reports of the company were not credible and might therefore not serve the purpose for which performance reports were meant for. Hollenbeck, Gerhert and Wright (2003) stated that during feedback, specific information

about modification of behaviour to meet objectives are pointed out. At the same time outstanding behaviours are praised to boost morale.

According to Hollenbeck and Wright (2003), assessing training needs is the process used to determine if training is necessary. Table 8 portrays findings on the setting of good performance appraisal targets analysing and interpreting appraisal data, conducting appraisal interview, writing appraisal report, designing and organising work-based, development plan for intervention. Majority (52.7%) of the respondents indicated that training was undertaken in the setting of good performance appraisal target, while 47.3 percent said no training was undertaken.

Drucker (1954) defines target setting as a quantitative measurable or at least, concrete performance goals that are often set jointly by the supervisor and subordinate. Armstrong (2001) also stated that target are quantifiable results to be attained, which can be measured in such terms as return on capital employed, output, throughput, sales, levels of service delivery, cost reduction, reduction of reject rates. Bourne (2006) was of the view that the appraiser and appraisee should agree on the target before they are put into operation.

**Table 8: Respondents training needs in performance appraisal**

Activities	Responses in percentages		
	Training	Not	Total
	Undertaken	undertaken	
Setting good performance appraisal target	52.7	47.3	100
Analysing and interpreting appraisal data	38.2	61.8	100
Conducting appraisal interview	20.0	80	100



Writing appraisal report	20.0	80.0	100
Designing and organising work based Development plan for intervention.	30.9	69.1	100
No training required	3.6	96.4	100

Source: Field study 2008      N = 54

With respect to analysing performance appraisal data, a number of well defined steps were identified. Minority of respondents (32.2%) indicated that training was undertaken on data analysis in performance appraisal. Majority of the respondents (61.8 %) indicated that no training was undertaken. Further investigation is necessary according to <http://www.ehow.com>, in case the analysis shows the problem to be one of lack of ability. It may well be that there is skill shortage or the job has grown more complex therefore requiring greater organizational skills.

With regards to conducting appraisal interview, 80 percent of employees stated that training on appraisal interview was needed. On the other hand, 20 percent said they did not need any further training. Ivancevich and Glueck (2002) have referred to appraisal interview as feedback interview. They indicated that the appraisal interview takes place after the appraisal form has been completed. The appraisal interview is therefore to communicate results of the appraisal to the appraisee.

When the opinions of appraisees were sought in respect of the need for training appraisal reports writing, 20 percent stated that there was the need for such training while 80 percent stated that there was no need for training. The need for report writing skills was captured by Nazir (2009) who states that whilst some notes will be made during the appraisal, others will be made at its conclusion. In many organizations, the appraisal report consists of two portions, one of which is handed over to appraisee that works like open

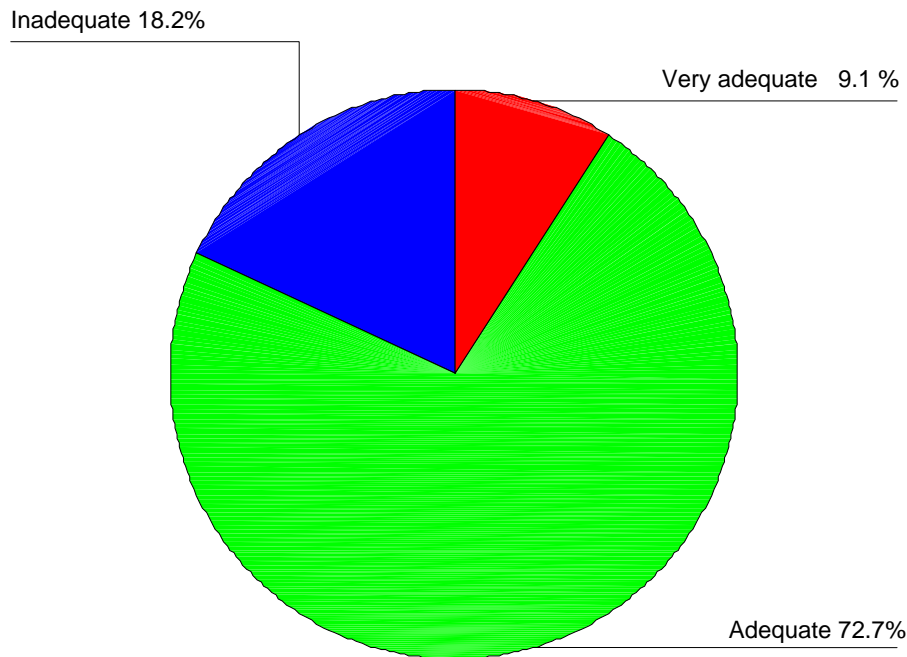
book paper, while the second is kept confidential and used by the supervisor subsequently. The supervisor is expected to note down general impressions so that they can be checked at the next assessment. An attempt to seek respondents view on designing and organising work based development plan for intervention revealed that majority (69.1%) said nothing was done in this area, minority (30.9%) stated that there was work-based intervention.

Regarding the need for training, Ivancevich (2002) is of the view that the approach to improving performance appraisal has been to train raters to become more effective users of the organizations performance appraisal system. A question on the training requirement of employees in the organization revealed that 3.6 percent stated that training was undertaken, while 96.4 percent indicated that no training was undertaken. These trends contradict the views of Ivancevich (2002).

An interview granted by one of the human resource managers at GCGL revealed that whenever appraisals were carried out and merit rating were done, most employees disagreed with their ratings and this brought about disagreements at the work place. This situation is not the best for peaceful co-existence since it can escalate to industrial unrest.

According to Ivancevich (2002), another approach to improving performance appraisal is to train raters to become more effective users of the organization's performance appraisal system. The two most popular types of training programmes designed to eliminate common rating errors are halo error and programmes designed to improve the supervisor's observation and recording skills.

Minority of the respondents (9.1%) who were supervisors or acted as appraisers out of the fifty four (54) described the training they received prior to writing performance appraisal reports as very adequate (Figure 2). Majority of the respondents (72.7%) described it as adequate, while a minority (18.2%) described it as inadequate.



**Figure 2: Adequacy of training**

Source: Field study, 2008

A good performance appraisal and evaluation system must tie the formal performance appraisal process to the company's strategies by specifying at the beginning of the evaluation period the type and level of performance that must be accomplished in order to achieve the strategy. Table 9 contain issues relating to whether appraisers and appraisees met to set performance targets, appraisers and appraisee mutually agreed upon resources to accomplish targets set, and whether the worker was made aware of the purposes, objectives and standards for his/ her appraisal.

**Table 9: Set performance targets and provision of resources**

	Responses (%)			
	SA	A	D	SD
Both parties meet to set target.	27(49.1)	25(45.5)	3(5.5)	
Both parties agree on resources to accomplish targets.	17(30.9)	33(60.0)	5(9.1)	
Appraisee is made aware of the purposes, objectives and standard for his/ her appraisal.	26(47.3)	26(47.3)	2(3.6)	1(1.8)

Source: Field study 2008

When a question was asked on whether appraiser and appraisee met to set performance target at the beginning of the year, 49.1 percent of the 54 respondents strongly agreed that appraisers and appraisees met to set performance target at the beginning of the year. On the other hand 45.5 percent of the respondents agreed that performance standard were set, whereas three, which forms 5.5 percent disagreed that any performance targets were set at the beginning of the year (Table 9). This suggests that to a large extent that the appraiser and appraisee, met to set performance targets. Management by Objectives (MBO) as propounded by Drucker (1954) is a method based on quantitative, measurable or at least, concrete performance goals that are often set jointly by the supervisor and subordinate.

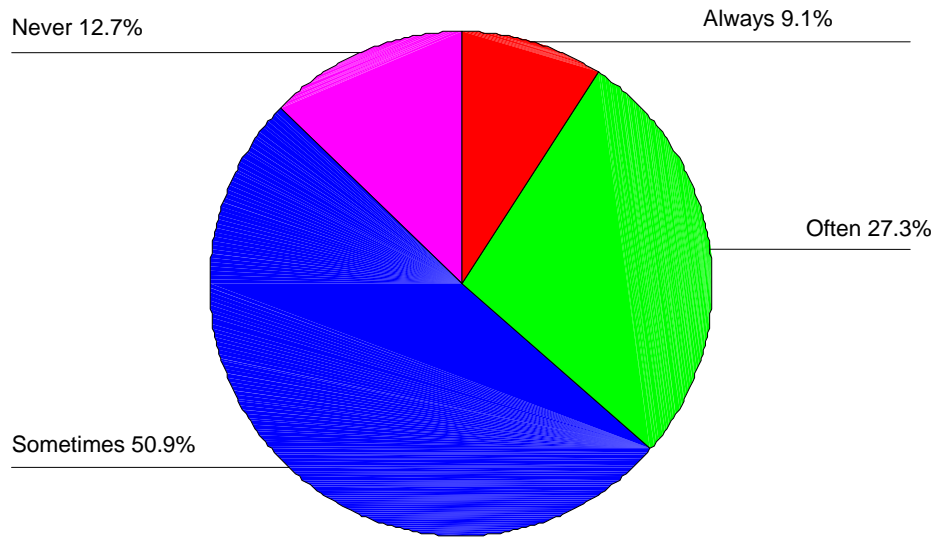
The second issue examined in Table 9 was whether there was mutual agreement upon resources to accomplish targets set. Out of the 54 respondents, 30.9 percent or 31 percent and 60 percent strongly agreed that there was mutual agreement on resources needed to accomplish assigned task and target objectives set by management. However, nine percent disagreed that mutual agreement was made for the provision of necessary resources for the accomplishment of set objectives and target. The disagreed findings contradict literature as purported by Drucker (1954), who stated that through mutual

discussion, the appraiser and appraisee jointly clarify the supervisor's supporting and evaluation role. This results in a renewal or reformulation of the mutually agreed-upon targets for the following period thereby establishing a cyclical pattern (Nankarvis et al., 2002).

The last issue discussed here is whether the worker was made aware of the purposes, objectives and standard for his/ her appraisal. Equal percentage of respondents (47.3%) accepted the position that workers of Graphic Communications Group Ltd were made aware of the purpose, objective and standards for appraising performance, while only 5.4 percent disagreed with the assertion. The overwhelming agreement is in line with Baker's (2002) view of performance appraisal as a special form of evaluation involving comparison of an employee with a performance standard which describes what the employee is expected to do in terms of behaviour and results.

When a question was asked as to how regular formal and informal post appraisal discussions were held with workers drew the following responses 50.9 percent of respondents agreed that they sometimes held interviews with appraisers soon after appraisal. On the other hand, five or 9.1 percent responded that they always held such interviews, while 12.7 percent said they never held appraisal interviews. However, 27.3 percent indicated that they often held such interviews. The responses as to how regular informal and / or formal post appraisal discussions were held with workers are represented in Figure 3.

Such interviews were meant to draw the attention of appraisees to their strengths and weaknesses such that they were able to make necessary adjustment in order to improve their performance in the future. About a third of respondents who were appraisers did not conduct regular interviews. They cited excessive number of workers, avoidance of conflict, and administrative work overload as hindrances.



**Figure 3: Trend of post appraisal discussion**

Source: Field study, 2008

### **Areas of performance appraisal where improvement is needed**

The third objective explored possible areas of improvement in terms of appraisal at GCGL. Issues discussed under this objective include forms of assistance given to appraisees by appraisers, assistance to non performing employees and access to completed appraisal reports. After performance appraisal, different forms of assistance are usually

given to the appraisees in order to help them improve upon their performance. These include direct assistance by the immediate manager, encouraging individuals to improve themselves. Through independence study placing the appraisee under the supervision of an experienced colleague, a resource person or a subject matter specialist who provides external assistance, and assisting appraisee to participate in in-service training outside the organization (Smith, 2008)

Table 10 shows responses with regards to whether the identified assistance are indeed given to help improve performance.

It is clear from the Table that a greater percentage of respondents did not give or receive the identified form of assistance. Comparing the magnitude of the percentages in the affirmative and those in the negative, it is evident that not much assistance was given to appraisees in Graphic Communication Group to improve on performance after appraisal report.

**Table 10:Forms of assistance given to appraisees by appraisers**

Activities (Assistance)	Responses (%)		
	Assistance Given	Assistance Given	not Given
Direct assistance by immediate manager	49.1	50.9	100
Encouraging individuals to study	30	70	

independently to improve themselves.		100
Appraisee placed under the supervision of an experienced colleague.	18.2	81.0
A resource person on a subject matter specialist provides external assistance.	25.5	74.5
Appraisee is assisted to participate in In-service training outside the organization.	38.2	61.8
		100

Source: Field study 2008

N= 54

According to an article from global trends in performance appraisal([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/360\\_degree\\_feedback](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/360_degree_feedback)) 360 degree feedback, also known as 'multi-rater feedback', is the most comprehensive appraisal where feedback about the employees' performance comes from all the sources that come in contact with the employee on his job. The 360 degree method has the merit of ensuring that performance is measured against objective criteria and that subordinates correct shortfalls all by themselves or could do that jointly with the superiors. An attempt to find out how employees had access to direct assistance by immediate managers revealed that 49.1 percent of respondents were given assistance, while 50.9 percent claimed that no assistance was given. This finding corroborates existing literature which recommends an all-round evaluation of employees' performance([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/360\\_degree\\_feedback](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/360_degree_feedback)).



Subordinates were required to set for themselves performance goals or targets, representing ways in which they could improve upon their own efficiency and that of their department (Nankervis, 2002). The study tried to find out how the employees were encouraged to study independently to improve themselves. It came to light that 30% had assistance provided to them, whilst majority (70%) did not have any form of assistance after the appraisal exercise. The fact that only a minority received assistance means that what was stated in the performance appraisal policy document of the organization on main aims of the policy towards the individual was not practiced.

A question asked to find out whether or not an appraisee is placed under the supervision of an experienced colleague revealed that 18.2 percent had such assistance given, but the majority (81.8%) said no assistance was given. The need for coaching and mentoring is very necessary in all organizations. Armstrong (2001) states that coaching is a person-to-person technique designed to develop individual skills, knowledge and attitudes. Coaching is most effective if it can take place informally as part of the normal process of management or team leadership.

Mentoring is the process of using specially selected and trained individuals to provide guidance and advice which will help develop the careers of 'proteges' allotted to them. Mentoring also complements formal training by providing those who benefit from it with individual guidance from experienced managers who are wise in the ways of the organization. A resource person or a subject matter specialist provides external assistance. This is where the company's management organise training for the affected appraisees so as to enable them find a solution to the problem at hand. An attempt was made to find out how best the organization does this and 25.5 percent stated that assistance was given, while the majority (74.5%) said no assistance was given.

According to Ivancevich(2002), another approach to improving performance appraisal has been to train employees to become more effective users of the organization’s performance appraisal system. The most popular type of training programmes is in-service training or on-the job training. Questions aimed at finding out how appraisees were assisted to undergo or to participate in in-service training outside the organization revealed that 38.2 percent of respondents participated in in-service training, but majority (61.8%) did not receive any form of in-service training. This revelation is different from what the training manager stated that there was regular training for employees twice in the year, but the employees showed apathy towards such training programmes. Management need to put measures in place to make training compulsory.

Table 11 contains issues examined in connection with how non performing employees were treated after all the needed assistance had been offered. Nine (9% ) percent of the appraisees agreed that when a worker failed to improve after intervention measures were put in place to assist, the worker was transferred to a district office. Another 29 percent stated that further support was provided by the supervisor. The latter case is considered as the best because it indicated that weak staff were not transferred to other areas only to become a burden to other station but rather further support was provided by the supervisor (Wright &Noel, 1996).

**Table 11: Assistance to non performing employees**

Activity	Results (%)
Staff transferred to district office	9
Further support provided by supervisor	29
Worker appointment terminated	10

Worker appointment not terminated	19
Nothing is done to non-performing appraisee	16
Non performers not set free but encouraged to improve	17

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Source: Field study 2008      N= 54

As to what happens to non performing appraisees, 10% of respondents said the worker's appointment was terminated while 19 percent said the worker was retained, 16 percent of respondents indicated that nothing was done to a non performing appraisee, and 17 percent were of the view that non - performing appraisees were not left alone but encouraged to improve their performance. Nankervis (2002) state that a subordinate is not only required to set for him/her self, performance goals or targets but also find ways in which he can improve efficiency and that of the department.

Regarding access to appraisal reports the results showed that more than half of the respondents (74.5%) had access to the completed reports with only a small percentage (12.7%) indicating that they never had access to such reports. This results point to the fact that the appraisal system conducted in this organization was in consonance with accepted standards which stipulate that an employee is entitled to what he/ she has been appraised on and reasons should be assigned for the appraisers comments. If necessary the supervisor may set an informal or sometimes formal meeting with the appraisee, to discuss his point of view and his expectations (Narzir, 2009).

The responses to questions regarding employees access to appraisal results brought out the following responses, 49.1 percent of respondents stated that appraisees always had access to completed appraisal results, 3.6 percent said they often had access, 21.8 percent of the employees were of the view that they sometimes had access,

whereas 12.7 percent stated that they never had access to the results. A further attempt to ascertain whether both the appraisees and appraisers had access to completed appraisal reports also indicated that 49.1 percent of appraisees always have access, 14.5 percent often had access, 21.8 percent sometimes had access and 5.5 percent never had access to such completed reports.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS**

## **Introduction**

This chapter contains a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations for stakeholders in Graphic Communications Group Ltd (GCGL). The study generally sought to evaluate the performance appraisal system as practiced by public organizations such as GCGL. The specific objectives were to examine the existing performance appraisal system of GCGL, and to determine the effectiveness of the current appraisal system in the Graphic Communications Group Limited. In addition the study aimed at exploring areas of performance appraisal at GCGL where improvement was needed and to make recommendations to stakeholders in GCGL for enhance performance appraisal.

Data collection was mainly from two sources namely, primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources consisted of internal reports and files that were made available by the Human Resource department and literature from the organization's library. Primary data were sought directly from the employees and managers of the company. The study utilised random sampling approach and fifty four (54) questionnaires were retrieved from all ten (10) departments. The data collected were grouped into frequencies and expressed in percentages in the form of tables and figures.

## **Summary of findings**

The first objective of the study dealt with examining the existing performance appraisal system of Graphic Communications Group Limited and the emergent issues are:

- Performance appraisal system was formal and it was held annually.
- Appraisal focused on job delivery, personal qualities, employee's growth and development among others.
- Performance appraisal was mainly for administrative purpose.

- The senior staff appraisal was such that the job holder analyzed his / her performance over the past year highlighting objectives that had been achieved and what objectives should be adopted for the following year.
- Employees did not participate in pre-appraisal conference, with 72.2 percent of respondents attesting to this.
- Self-appraisal was not encouraged in the organization.
- Appraisal diaries are not kept for the purpose of tracking performance of employees.
- Appraisal interviews do not benefit all employees.
- Only 18.2 percent of employees benefit from follow up and were provided with some form of assistance.

The second objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the current appraisal system in GCGL. The main findings were as follows:

- It was clear that appraisee and appraisers did not meet to set performance standard.
- Sixty percent of respondents agreed that resources were available to accomplish tasks.
- Respondents responded in the affirmation on the objective and standard for appraising employees with 47.3 percent strongly agreeing and another 47.3 percent agreeing.
- Post appraisal interview in the organization was average with 50.9 percent stating that sometimes post appraisal interviews are held.

The third objective was to examine areas of performance appraisal where improvement is needed. The emerging issues were:

- The degree of post-appraisal assistance provided by immediate managers was low.
- Appraisees were not encouraged to study independently to improve themselves.

- The practice of placing appraisee under the supervision of an experienced colleague to be mentored and coached was currently absent.
- Although in-service training was regularly organized at GCGL workers were not compelled to attend.

## **Conclusion**

The GCGL practiced the administrative type of performance appraisal system. This took the form of attending pre-appraisal conferences, filling appraisal forms and attending appraisal interviews. Follow-up after the entire process to assist non performing employees is not part of the practice in this organization.

The performance appraisal system at GCGL was not very effective, and employees did not understand the importance of the entire exercise. In addition, the system did not encourage employees to do self appraisal. No meaningful follow up was made to assist those who fell below the standard.

Areas of performance appraisal that needed improvement were target setting, and this requires that managers as well as supervisors should be trained in this area. Feedback to employees on how well or bad they were performing at their present job should be encouraged. Pre- appraisal conference to create the needed awareness among employees should be instituted in GCGL.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the key findings and conclusions, it is recommended that HR Managers at Graphic should:

1. Undertake urgent in-depth training in performance rating and reporting process.
2. See to it that performance appraisal results are used to the letter as this would make appraisees take the appraisals system more seriously.
3. Educate supervisors on setting performance target.
4. Organize pre-appraisal conferences to psyche up employees on the entire process.
5. After the exercise organizes post-appraisal conference where employees would have access to their completed appraisal report and discuss the results.
6. Train other managers who would be appraising their subordinates
7. Encourage appraisers to keep diaries on worker performance to enable them track the performance of appraisees.
8. Facilitate the re-designing of appraisal forms to suit the specific needs of various departments as this would create healthy competition among the departments.
9. Management of the company therefore must consider instituting effective retention strategies, including effective performance appraisal system to motivate the employee to remain in the company and contribute to the achievement of the company's core objectives.
10. If this trend is allowed to continue it would ruin the future of the organization. The earlier this trend is checked by making it mandatory for all employees to attend training courses the better.



Appraisers are also advised to:

1. Undertake training on how to appraise subordinates, as this would go a long way to improve the entire system.
2. Be trained in the area of performance target setting.
3. Undergo training on how to analyze appraisal results
4. Be encouraged on detailed report writing so as to keep track of employee performance.
5. Discuss assessment and analysis of each review with the view to resetting standard for the next period based partly on experience gained from the first one.

Appraisees should

1. Organize pre-appraisal as well as post-appraisal conferences in order to help themselves.
2. Request access to completed appraisal report by appraisers in the organization.
3. Seek performance appraisal review interviews in the organization.
4. Seek post-appraisal feedback.
5. Improve upon their performance if the result shows a deficit in performance.

### **Issues for Further Research**

Further research should focus on the use of performance management. It is suggested that other researchers can conduct similar studies using larger sample sizes and more rigorous analytical procedures to determine whether similar results will be obtained.

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## **APPENDIX A**

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

This research is in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of MA degree in Human Resource Management at Institute of Development, faculty Social Sciences, University of Cape Coast. It is mainly for academic purpose and all responses would be treated confidentially. Your candid response to the issues will be greatly appreciated.

### **SECTION A**

#### **Background information**

1. Name of Department. ....

2. Professional Qualification: please state

3. Working Experience:

- a) 1-3 years
- b) 4-7 years
- c) 8-11 years
- d) 12 or more years

4. How many workers are in your department? .....

5. Number of years of experience in appraisal exercises:

- a) 1-2 years
- b) 3-4 years
- c) 5 or more years
- d) None

6. Age

- a) 20- 29



- b) 30- 39
- c) 40- 49
- d) 50 and above

7. Gender of employee

- a) Male
- b) Female

8. Marital status

- a) Married
- b) Single
- c) Divorce or Separated

9. Number of people in the family

**SECTION B**

**Examination of existing PA system at Graphic Comm. Group Ltd.**

Please tick (✓) the appropriate boxes to indicate the key roles you are expected to play in the appraisal system:

- 10. Conduct pre-appraisal conference
- 11. Self Appraisal
- 12. Keeping appraisal diary on worker performance
- 13. Conduct appraisal interview
- 14. Follow –up to assist workers to improve their professional competence
- 15. Report writing
- 16. Others (please specify).....

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate boxes the areas in which you think you need training.

- 17. [ ] Setting good performance appraisal target

18. [ ] Keeping appraisal diaries on worker permanence for accurate assessment
19. [ ] Conducting appraisal interview
20. [ ] Analyzing and interpreting appraisal data
21. [ ] Writing appraisal report
22. [ ] Designing and organizing work- based development plan for intervention
23. [ ] No training required
24. How would you describe the adequacy of training you have received?
  - a) Very adequate
  - b) Adequate
  - c) Inadequate

**SECTION C**

**Effectiveness of appraisal process at GCGL**

Kindly tick (✓) the responses that best reflect your views on the performance appraisal process in your organization

**Key: SA-Strongly Agree A-Agree D-Disagree SD-Strongly Disagree**

	<b>Statements: I. Pre-Appraisal Conference/ Interview</b>	SA	A	D	SD
25.	Appraisal and Appraisees meet to set performance target at the beginning of the year.				
26.	Appraiser and appraisee mutually agree upon resources necessary to accomplish the target objectives set.				
27.	The worker is made aware of the purpose, objective and standard for appraising his or her				

	performance.				
--	--------------	--	--	--	--

**Collection of quality appraisal data**

**a) Variety of sources of information/frequencies**

Please indicate with a tick (✓) in the appropriate boxes how often you draw from the following sources of relevant information?

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
28.	Direct worker observation				
29.	Self appraisal				
30.	Reviewing documents relating to work				
31.	Stakeholder survey: information from workers, public and readers				
32.	Evidence of workers achievements and progress				

**Appraisal interview**

33. Please tick (✓) the appropriate box to indicate how regularly you hold informal and formal discussions with workers soon after appraisal:

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

d) Often

34. If your response to question 33 is yes indicate with a tick (✓) why you are not able to hold regular appraisal interviews.

a)  Workers are too many

b)  Appraisers do not want any conflict with their subordinates.

c)  The administrative work is too involving to allow room for appraisal interviews

d)  Others (specify)

**How often do you carry out the following activities?**

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
35.	In-service training is organised as soon as deficiencies of work are identified				
36.	Workers whose performance reveal no cause for concern are given the needed guidance and assistance to develop new areas of potentials				

**Variety of Forms of Assistance**

How are appraises assisted to improve upon their performance after appraisal? Kindly tick (✓) the form of assistance provided.

37. a)  Direct assistance provided by the appraiser (supervisor, Immediate manager).

b)  Individuals are encouraged to study independently to improve themselves.

- c)  The appraisee is placed under the supervision of an experience colleague.
- d)  a resource person or a Subject Specialist provides External assistance.
- e)  The appraisee is assisted to participate in in-service training/seminar in or outside the organization.
- f)  Others (please specify).....

38. In your opinion, what is normally done when a non- performing worker fails to improve after the intervention put in by the supervisor? Please tick (✓) the appropriate box.

- a)  Worker is transferred to the District Office.
- b)  Further support is provided by the supervisor.
- c)  The worker’s appointment is terminated.
- d)  Nothing is done to the worker.
- e)  Others (please specify).....

**SECTION D**

**Areas of PA where improvement is needed**

39. Comment on the following statements by ticking (✓) the appropriate boxes.

Key: A-Always O-Often S-Sometimes N-Never

	Statement	A	O	S	N
a)	Appraisees always have access to appraisal report.				
b)	Appraisers and appraisees have honest discussion on the report.				

**Variety of forms of assistance**

How are appraisals assisted to improve upon their performance after appraisal? Kindly tick (✓) the form of assistance provided.

40. In your opinion, what is normally done when a non-performing worker fails to improve after the intervention put in by the supervisor? Please tick (✓) the appropriate box.

- a)  Worker is transferred.
- b)  The supervisor provides further support.
- c)  The worker's appointment is terminated.
- d)  Nothing is done to the worker.
- e)  Others (please specify).....

**SECTION E**

**Ways of improving Performance Appraisal system at Graphic**

Key: SA -Strongly A- Agree D-Disagree SD- Strongly Disagree

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Please tick (✓) the appropriate boxes.

	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
41.	The appraisal procedure enables appraisers to provide good organizational management.				
42.	The appraisal system is perceived as a source of good feedback on employee performance				
43.	The appraisal system is an effective tool to				

	create open and effective communication				
44.	The appraisal system is a way to identify the actual needs of individual managers and the organization				
45.	The appraisal system facilitates continuous self-learning and development				
46.	The appraisal system helps to improve working and development				

47. What are your perceptions about appraisals in this organization?

.....  
.....

48. How effective is performance appraisals to you?

.....

**APPENDIX B**

**Oral interview guide**

Time with one of the HR managers (administration)

- Self introduction
- Purpose of meeting
- Ask the following questions for clarification:
- What is the total number of employees in the organization?
- How many females do you have and what is the total number of males?
- How many departments do you have in the organization?
- A brief narration of how performance appraisals is done in Graphic
- What problems are encountered in administration of Performance appraisal

- Can you please tell me the role of the various positions on the organogram of the organization?
- How often do you hold appraisal interviews informally?
- What prevents you from holding regular appraisal interviews?

Time with the training manager, he answered the following questions:

- The training manager was made to answer the following questions for the researcher
- How often do employees undergo training?
- How do you determine who undergo the training and who does not?
- As part of the departments schedule do you do orientation for newly hired employees?
- How do you see the training policy of the organization

### APPENDIX C

## GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS GROUP LIMITED (GCGL)

### JUNIOR STAFF APPRAISAL FORM

#### SECTION 1

<i>Appraisee's Details</i>						
Name	of	Appraisee	Job	Title	and	grade:
.....			.....			
.....			.....			
.....			.....			
Date	of	Appraisal	No of years in current job.....			
.....			.....			
.....			.....			
Date	of	Employment:	Current	annual	gross	salary
.....			.....			
.....			.....			



.....			
Name	of Appraiser's	Job	Title:
Appraiser:.....	.....	.....	.....
.....			
.....			

**SECTION 2B**

**Performance Competencies – “Making a Difference by working and Learning Together”**

	End of period Rating. Place an X on scale to rate the degree of proficiency of the appraisee					
	1 Outstandi	2 Very	3 Good	4 Satisfacto	5 Unsatisfacto	6 Poor
Willingness to accept assigned tasks						
Competence (skills, knowledge and experience) to perform tasks assigned and familiarity with work processes						
Accuracy, and attention to detail						
Volume and quality of work produced in comparison with total assigned tasks						
Attendance at work relative to total number of working days						
Adherence to company's reporting and closing time						

Commitment: Degree to which employee is willing to work outside normal working hours, job schedule, attendance of company-wide event (e.g.) durbars						
Degree to which employee functions as a member of the team and relates to superiors and peers						
<b>Total</b>						

### SECTION 3

#### Strengths and Needs Analysis (Appraiser to provide)

Strengths	Areas to develop in line with targets and competencies

### SECTION 4

#### Training and development activities for the appraisal year and what will be undertaken during the next 12 months

Training Activity over the past 12 months	Date	
Training Activity proposed for the next 12 months	Date	Priority (High, Medium or Low)

### SECTION 5

<b><i>Appraiser's Assessment</i></b>	
Evaluate the overall performance of the appraisee and give reasons/observations for particularly good or less satisfactory performance and recommendations for improvement	
Signature of Appraiser:	Date:

**SECTION 6**

Appraisee's comments:	
Signature:	Date:

For HR use only - End of Year Summary of Performance Rating

---

**Objectives/Competencies**

2A Actual Score as a percentage of 100

Overall Rating

Rating	Total
Total (Expressed as a percentage of 100)	

---

A  Performed consistently and significantly above standards in virtually all areas; far exceeded normal expectations

- B  Performed well above standards in many important aspects; usually exceeded normal expectations
  - C  Performance met standards in all important aspects; good contributor.
  - D  Performance slightly below standards in some important aspects, but meets standards in others; performance generally acceptable but improvement needed to fully achieve functional performance level.
  - E  Performance below standards in a number of critical aspects; substantial improvement needed.
  - F  Performance significantly below standards in virtually all critical areas; substantial improvement required
- 
-

**APPENDIX D**

**SENIOR STAFF APPRAISAL FORM**

**SECTION 1**

<i>Appraisee's Details</i>						
Name	of	Appraisee	Job	Title	and	grade:
.....			.....	.....		
			.....	.....		
			.....			
Date	of	Appraisal	No of years in current job.....			
.....			.....			
			.....			
			.....			
Date	of	Employment:	Current	annual	gross	salary
.....			.....			
			.....			
			.....			
Name		of	Appraiser's	Job		Title:
Appraiser:.....			.....			
			.....			
			.....			

**SECTION 2A**

Performance against Key Job Objectives (please rate –

Performance on a scale of A – F, A being the highest and F being the lowest)

1. Targets agreed for the year – These may include daily, weekly or monthly job schedules (These should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Limited targets and agreement reached on how and when these will be monitored). You may use a separate sheet of paper.

Primary performance expectations: Responsibilities/Objectives	What are the measures of success and monitoring mechanisms (including deadlines)	End of period Rating. Place an X to indicate degree to which target has been achieved					
		A Outstanding	B Very Good	C Good	D Satisfactor	E Unsatisfactor	F Poor
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

**Matrix**

- A – Outstanding                      Exceeded stretching targets with outstanding results
- B – Very Good                         Exceeded targets with very good results
- C – Good                                 Achieved targets set
- D – Satisfactory                       Achievement fell slightly below target
- E - Unsatisfactory                    Achievements fell significantly below target
- F – Poor                                 Failed to achieve target

**SECTION 2B: Performance Competencies – “Making a Difference by working and Learning Together”**

	End of period Rating. Place an X on scale to rate the degree of proficiency of the appraisee					
	1 Outstandi	2 Very	3 Good	4 Satisfactor	5 Unsatisfacto	6 Poor

<p><b>Job Knowledge/Competency:</b>          Demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the job effectively. Understands the expectations of the job and remains current regarding new developments in areas of responsibility. Performs responsibilities in accordance with job procedures and policies.</p>						
<p><b>Quality/Quantity of Work:</b>          Completes assignments in a thorough, accurate, and timely manner that achieves expected outcomes. Exhibits concern for the goals and needs of the department and others that depend on services or work products</p>						
<p><b>Time management</b> – Attendance at work, relative to total number of working days. Adherence to Company’s reporting and closing times</p>						
<p><b>Initiative</b> – Degree to which employee anticipates events and or takes appropriate action without prompting from anyone</p>						
<p><b>Problem Solving/Creativity/Initiative</b>          : Identifies and analyzes problems. Formulates alternative solutions. Takes or recommends appropriate actions. Follow up to ensure problems are resolved. Sets own constructive work practices and recommends and creates own procedures</p>						

<p><b>Teamwork and Cooperation:</b> Maintains harmonious and effective work relationships with co-workers, subordinates and superiors. Adapts to changing priorities and demands. Shares information and resources with others to promote positive and collaborative work relationships.</p>						
<p><b>Interpersonal Skills:</b> Extent to which the employee is cooperative, considerate and tactful in dealing with supervisors, subordinates, peers, and others.</p>						
<p><b>Communication (Oral and Written):</b> Effectively conveys information and ideas both orally and in writing. Listens carefully and seeks clarification to ensure understanding</p>						
<p>Total</p>						
<p>Appraiser ..... ..... ..... Date.....</p>	<p>Appraisee..... ..... ..... Date .....</p>					

**SECTION 3**

**Strengths and Needs Analysis (Appraiser to provide)**

<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Areas to develop in line with targets and competencies</p>



#### SECTION 4

**Training and development activities for the appraisal year and what will be undertaken during the next 12 months**

Training Activity over the past 12 months	Date	
Training Activity proposed for the next 12 months	Date	Priority ( High, Medium or Low

#### SECTION 5

<b><i>Appraiser's Assessment</i></b> Evaluate the overall performance of the appraisee and give reasons/observations for particularly good or less satisfactory performance and recommendations for improvement	
Signature of Appraiser:	Date:

#### SECTION 6

Appraisee's comments:	
Signature:	Date:

For HR use only - End of Year Summary of Performance Rating

---

**Objectives**

2a    Actual Score                    x            60  
       Total Score

**Competencies**

2b    Actual Score                    x            40  
       Total Score

---

**Overall Rating**

Rating	Total
2A Performance Objectives	
2B Competencies	
Total (Expressed as a percentage of 100)	

- 
- A          Performed consistently and significantly above standards in virtually all areas; far exceeded normal expectations
  - B          Performed well above standards in may important aspects; usually exceeded normal expectations
  - C          Performance met standards in all important aspects; good contributor.

- D        Performance slightly below standards in some important aspects, but meets standards in others; performance generally acceptable but improvement needed to fully achieve functional performance level.
  - E        Performance below standards in a number of critical aspects; substantial improvement needed.
  - F        Performance significantly below standards in virtually all critical areas; substantial improvement required.
- 
-