

# Leadership, Management, Performance Reviews

## Rate The Candidates (Or Why Employee Ratings Are Dangerous)

### Brief Description/Purpose

- To point out how ineffective the rating of employee performance is, due to various biases, vagueness, etc.
- To stimulate thought and discussion about performance management, and how to use it for improving performance.

### Type

Individual worksheet and whole group discussions, although you can also do this in smaller groups.

### Age Appropriate

Adults

### Ideal Group Size

Any size.

### Time For Exercise

20-30 minutes

### Topic/Subject

Performance management, management and leadership, HR, performance reviews

### Detailed Instructions If Needed

This can be a fun, sometimes heated exercise that demonstrates how difficult it is to rate employees using typical employee rating forms. There are a lot of variations possible.

This is a great exercise during election campaigns.

1. Make up a rating form with about 5-10 items on it, that involve rating. You can take actual items from the evaluation from used in a real organization, and items could relate to communication, leadership, conflict management, etc...things that would typically be on an employee evaluation form.
2. Distribute the forms, and ask people to take a minute or two to "rate" political leaders involved in the election (e.g. presidential candidates, etc) Choose the three most prominent so it's likely everyone present knows them. Each person should rate each candidate on a separate form.
3. Reconvene the group and elicit individual ratings on the various items.

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You will find a quite large range of ratings and no matter how long you worked to come to consensus, you'd never get it.

## Debriefing

This is such a flexible exercise that you can draw out almost any of the flaws related to rating employees depending on the debrief questions you use.

Why is there such vast disagreement? How is this disagreement analogous to the rating of employees?

If we added up each candidates "score" into one number, what would that number mean? Would it mean one candidate was "more valuable" than another with a lower "score"?

If we wanted to help the candidates improve, could we use these ratings to give them feedback so they would "perform" better in the future?

## Additional Information if Available

Be sure to continuously map the discussion of candidates to the task of rating employees and improving their performance.

## Cautions/Hints

If it's not an election year, or if you choose, you can have participants rate almost anything where it's likely they will disagree. For example, rating comedy tv shows, or you could play actual clips of people speakin public. Or cars. Politicians work because almost everyone will know their names and seen them in the news.

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