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Employee Led Appraisal

A practical appraisal framework that gives employees time to prepare, equips leaders to lead well and turns the meeting into visible action.

Appraisals often become anxious, one-sided and overly focused on what needs to improve. This approach changes the experience without losing structure or accountability. The employee has time to think, the leader arrives prepared, and the conversation ends with a clear plan.

What changes

The employee has a proper role

- Receives a working notebook at least two weeks before the meeting.
- Reflects, gathers evidence and shares first.
- Raises achievements, ambitions, barriers and support needed.
- Maps their experience against the organisation's values and behaviours.

The leader still leads

- Receives clear preparation tools and a route through the conversation.
- Listens first, then adds evidence, expectations and feedback.
- Provides challenge, coaching and practical support.
- Leaves with agreed actions, owners and review dates.

The complete pathway

Before, during and after the appraisal - with learning carried back into the organisation.

1 Understand and build

Review the current process, values, behavioural framework, roles and practical requirements.

2 Prepare

Issue the notebook at least two weeks ahead. Give leaders their guide, tools and briefing.

3 Meet

The employee shares first. The leader listens, adds perspective and guides a balanced discussion.

4 Agree

Record goals, actions, support, owners and timescales in a practical development plan.

5 Follow through

Allow reflection, clarify points, review progress and keep agreed actions active.

6 Learn

Bring recurring themes together to identify skills gaps, workplace barriers and wider organisational priorities.

Employee-led does not mean unstructured. It means both people arrive prepared and both leave clear about what happens next.

Why it works in practice

The design addresses the parts of appraisal that usually create frustration: too little preparation, a conversation dominated by the leader, feedback detached from evidence and actions that disappear once the meeting is over.

Prepared, not pressured

- The notebook gives the employee time to think across the whole review period, rather than relying on the last few weeks.
- The leader has a clear structure and arrives ready to listen, question and support.

Balanced, not one-sided

- The employee brings their evidence and view first.
- The leader adds context, expectations and constructive challenge, including the conditions affecting performance.

The result is a more useful conversation: grounded in the organisation's values and behaviours, connected to real work and followed by actions that have owners, support and review dates.

02

Built around your organisation

The framework is established. The finished product is tailored to the organisation using its own values, language and behavioural expectations.

Bridge starts with how appraisal works in practice: the current documentation, timings, roles, leadership expectations and the experience people are having. We then build the materials around the organisation's existing way of working, so the process feels relevant, usable and owned.

Values and behaviours are part of the working system

We map the appraisal against the organisation's current values - not Bridge's values - and make those values practical. They are used in the employee notebook, self-assessment, leader guide, conversation and appraisal record. Where values exist but behaviours have not been defined, Bridge can create a practical behavioural framework as part of the work.

What the organisation receives

Employee working notebook Preparation space, reflection prompts, evidence, questions and action planning.	**Leader guide** A clear route through the meeting, with prompts for listening, feedback, challenge and support.
Values and behavioural framework A practical link between organisational values, observable behaviours and the appraisal.	**60- and 90-minute pathways** A consistent structure that can flex to different roles, levels and circumstances.
Appraisal record A concise record of the discussion, decisions, support and review points.	**Personal development plan** Goals, actions, owners, resources and timescales that remain active after the meeting.
Communications and launch tools Materials that explain the purpose, prepare people and support a confident launch.	**Follow-up and review materials** Prompts for reflection, one-to-ones, progress checks and organisational learning.

An ecosystem lens, not a single conversation

Performance is considered alongside the conditions in which people are being asked to perform: expectations, workload and resources, relationships, communication, leadership behaviour, systems, processes and the working environment. The employee remains accountable for their contribution, while leaders and the organisation remain accountable for the conditions they create.

What happens afterwards

- Notes and reflection are completed while the conversation is still fresh.
- Actions, support, owners and dates are confirmed rather than left as good intentions.
- Progress is reviewed through one-to-ones and agreed follow-up points.
- Recurring themes are brought together to identify skills gaps, barriers and wider priorities.

Practical for employees. Clear for leaders. Useful for the organisation.

The framework is proven. The finished product is built around your organisation.

To discuss how Employee Led Appraisal could work in your organisation, contact Bridge Training and Events | insidebridge.com