

Member's Quarterly

Winter 2019 Edition

Ask the Expert

Can Feedback Apps Replace Annual Performance Reviews?

Support for the ritual of the annual performance review is becoming as rare as embracing a high-sugar diet or deep-fried anything. Its popularity as a useful exercise is fading fast.

Netflix, Microsoft, GE and Adobe, MGM Resorts International and Booking.com simply did away with it, a trend which many small firms are following.

Employees aren't complaining since their yearly round of praise or complaints rarely meant much to them. Complaints rarely led to change and praise was often shrugged off as too little, too late.

Despite this, a method is needed to assess and offer feedback to employees to help them learn and grow in their roles and responsibilities. Instant reviews mean problems can be addressed faster and not allowed to fester.

Human resources professionals charged with finding a new way to get feedback to employees are increasingly engaging with modern technology.

Feedback apps are finding their way into organizations around the world as employers struggle to deal with employee engagement issues and to provide feedback in a more timely and useful fashion.

If you are looking for options to your annual performance review, here are some of the growing number of apps to consider. Before you download any of them, take some time to first decide what your company's goals are with their feedback efforts. With the growing number of feedback apps on the market, this will make it easier for you to select one that can align with your organization's goals and vision.

Keep in mind as well that whatever app you suggest, it will only be as good as the managers using it. Feedback works best when it is well-timed and well-intended. Too much feedback can be over-powering for employees, making them feel like their every step is being watched and recorded. Too little feedback leaves the employee wondering if anyone is aware of their efforts or what is going on overall in the company.

One feedback app, Impraise (www.impraise.com) meets a lot of the issues by offering 360 degree feedback and real-time feedback. The 360 degree is a feedback system where the employee gets feedback not just from his or her manager, but also from all the people around them, often including their peers, their team members, their direct reports and even their suppliers or vendors in a project.

Impraise can be used in any environment, but it is particularly effective in organizations where teams are used to complete projects and then changed again for other projects. It encourages peer coaching and gives managers clear insight into team overviews. It can be customized to virtually any situation.

Workday (www.workday.com) is out of California like Impraise. This Cloud-based program adds finance to its human resources functions.

EchoSpan (www.echospan.com) offers a full suite of web-based review tools including performance reviews and 360 degree feedback as well. Available in more than 60 languages, it is used by more than 3,000 small and medium-sized businesses all over the world.

What is great about EchoSpan is that you don't have to invest in any expensive software. You just need your web browser. It works with all major browsers, tablet devices and mobile platforms.

The app lets you customize it to suit your individual needs as an organization. You can add or delete or change sections. There is room for unlimited reports and no additional course to run those reports.



Paula Morand
CSP

*Keynote Speaker,
Leadership Expert*

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Rypple Feedback (<https://www.crunchbase.com/organization/rypple>) out of Toronto is another feedback app, this time using social media. It has a simple interface to encourage the collection of anonymous feedback about job performance and other things. It has a "kudos" tool and even offers employees motivational badges.

Through it managers can track the improvements and accomplishments of their workers. Its user-friendliness makes it popular with employees.

Could a feedback app work in your company? Those who like it approve its immediacy and acceptance by younger employees in particular.

But like any other convenience, it comes with its downside. Some HR directors and managers worry that inappropriate feedback can be sent and tensions can rise if rules of use are not determined and maintained.

The goal is feedback tied to the organization's goals and vision. It is important to implement such feedback apps with that in mind.

Paula Morand is a keynote speaker, author and leadership expert who helps high potential visionaries and organizations take their brand and their business to the next level. She can be reached via email at bookings@paulamorand.com.