

How Can You Get a 5 (Excellent) in Performance Appraisal? A Specific Tip



First, the question is indeed hard.

Even a boss will find it hard to (upfront) explain, what will make him give an employee, a 5 out of 5 at year-end.

A year is too long, and what comes to mind at year-end are highlights – you will remember your biggest achievements; your boss will find it hard to overlook your ‘developmental need.’

But there is a way.

It is – Send an “Achievement Email” to your boss, every month.

List your 6 – 8 big achievements for the month in it, with a couple of lines on each.

12 monthly emails like this, with 6 good achievements in each (72 for the year), and you will have made your case for a 5 (Excellent) at the year-end Appraisal.

A couple of Do's and Don'ts based on my experience:

1. The first email might feel awkward.

You can start with – “Dear Sir / Madam, I thought going forward I will send you an update on my work every month. Accordingly, please find my update for the month of _____”

2. Send your Achievement email by the 10th of the month (for the previous month).

3. As the days and weeks pass, go on collating your achievements in a 'draft email.'

Don't wait until the month-end to remember what you have achieved during the month. Trust me, you won't remember even 25%.

Instead note it, as it happens, in a draft email. Once the month gets over, use the data to craft a fine Achievement Email for your boss.

4. Crafting the Achievement Email will take time – possibly two hours – but it will be the best two hours that you will ever put in (every month) for your career.

5. Avoid Generics in your achievement email. Instead, be Specific.

Generic – “Handled spike in Demand Draft volumes.”

Specific – “Handled 525 Demand Draft requests in a five-day period (8-13 April). Usually, we get 200 Demand Draft requests per week.”

6. In your email, mention your Lapses too.

Though the lapse might already be known to your boss – the day that the lapse occurred – include it again in your monthly Achievement Email.

The aim is for your email to be a one-stop view of how you have performed in the month.

7. If you are a Manager overseeing teams, include a section in your achievement email to showcase your People Development initiatives, too.

8. End your email with - “Please let me know any specific issue or area you want me to focus on.”

9. An indirect benefit of starting with this Achievement Email is that it will improve your 'Execution Skills.'

You'll no longer wait passively for things to happen.

Instead, you'll push, escalate, brainstorm solutions —and when required, even nag your boss for a decision - all because you'll want to showcase the item as an achievement in your monthly email.

Your appraisal is affected by a lot of factors - some beyond your manager's control - like the state of the economy, senior management directive to restrict promotion or increments, bell curve, etc.

But in the face of such directives, we – including your boss – exercise discretion.

If you are diligent - sending an Achievement email to your boss, month on month - you will find your boss amenable to your case for promotion and/or above-average increment.

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