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## You Can Profoundly Impact Performance

By Mary Jo McGrath, Attorney at Law  
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In working with hundreds of thousands of supervisors and site administrators during the past 25 years, I have often been asked to give advice on documenting for dismissal of tenured teachers, civil servants and other employees protected by strong bargaining agreements. My experience as an attorney has convinced me that it is impossible to prepare documents designed to dismiss such employees without having the end product read like a "hatchet job".

Documenting after the fact is simply too little too late.

### Document for Success

A better approach for supervisors is to document for success. Documenting for success will produce the appropriate result: commendation, remediation, or fair and just termination.

Documenting for success begins with managers who manage in writing. In today's common practice, a written performance record is only produced for a biannual evaluation or when things have reached the "disaster" stage.

### A New Model for Performance Management

In fact, the practice of limiting written communication to formal evaluations and last-ditch efforts can actually be counterproductive. Too often I hear managers *threaten* to "memo" their employees, as if written accountability records were some kind of disciplinary tool rather than a routine aspect of the supervision process.

I train supervisors in a new model for performance management. The McGrath model empowers managers to profoundly impact performance on an ongoing basis. My approach combines a commitment to effective and timely coaching with the idea that supervisors and employees must be accountable to each other for producing results in the workplace - whether in a classroom, government agency, manufacturing plant or corporate environment.

The cornerstone of this model is written communication using the McGrath FICA Standard and McGrath FICA Template. These instruments embody the legal principles that the Supreme Court uses to determine employee fitness.

Administrators have always wanted to do a good job of producing accountability records. Until now, they have been lacking the necessary structure. The McGrath SUCCEED Systems is that structure. It allows for truly constructive communication that leaves nothing out and creates a clear pathway for employee growth and development.

### Improve Employee Performance Quickly

When we don't empower our front line supervisors to take prompt, effective action, problems continue to compound and grow. The once enthusiastic administrator loses credibility, loses a sense of personal power, and ultimately loses the heart to strive to make a difference.

In organizations trained to use the McGrath model, supervisors and administrators improve employee performance quickly. It is not uncommon for problems that have been sources of frustration for months or years to be resolved in days or hours.

### **"...even the Union could not argue with the process"**

Betty Pehlman, Director of Human Resources for Upper Moreland Township School District in Pennsylvania says, "Within a few weeks of our managers completing the McGrath SUCCEED with Communication, Supervision, Evaluation and Leadership Course, they were able to utilize the concepts and model for written communication with several employees who had performance difficulties. In using the thinking process and communication tools taught in the program, they were able to stay focused on the issues, take into consideration all the circumstances surrounding the issue, including the human dynamics, and draw objective and defensible conclusions. The employees clearly understood what the concerns were, and why we had drawn the decisions we had. Even the union could not argue with the process, even though they disagreed with the outcome."

"By integrating this program into our leadership culture, we are changing that culture in a positive way, building trust and demonstrating to our employees that our intent is to be consistent and fair, but also to be respectful and considerate of them as people in our daily interactions with them."

### **A Vision for Success**

When supervisors begin to document performance regularly, effective employees excel. Those unwilling to meet professional standards soon see the "writing on the wall." Most leave quietly.

All of us have a vision for the success of our employees. I am committed to realizing this vision. The McGrath SUCCEED System is my contribution to the ongoing transformation of schools and workplaces. Thank you for allowing me to share in the vision with you.

*For more information on the McGrath SUCCEED System call 1-800-733-1638, visit our website at [www.mcgrathinc.com](http://www.mcgrathinc.com), or email [info@mcgrathinc.com](mailto:info@mcgrathinc.com) to let us know how we can be of service.*

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