

# SET YOUR COURSE

Leadership. Transition tips. Professional advice.



## Write a Standout Performance Review

Learn some ideas for acing job assessments.

**H**earing your supervisor's request for input for a performance review may cause you to cringe. First, this seems like bragging. Second, it affects your career. Third, input is often space-constrained. Finally, a tight deadline is often involved. How do you proceed?

Own your success! Dispel the misconception about bragging. Instead, use your performance review to highlight accomplishments. These tips apply to both military and civilian workplaces:

**1. Pretend you are writing about someone else.** Imagine you want to advance the career of a stellar subordinate. Now, recount those achievements.

**2. Maintain a job journal.** Record accomplishments as they occur. This precludes a frantic,

last-minute retrospective and ensures you don't overlook significant events.

**3. Capture the impact.** What resulted from your effort? Look beyond your workplace. Did you affect others in your organization or externally? Examine short- and long-term impacts, and offer specifics whenever possible.

**4. Scope the achievement.** Detail provides context, depth, and dimension—a mental yardstick for the reader. Completed ahead of schedule (saved time), finished under budget (saved money), or improved production (by X percent).

**5. Don't bury the golden nugget.** Open with the most important information; the reader's attention is fleeting. This helps bring the story into focus.

**6. Infuse excitement with verbs.** Avoid verbs such as responsible [for], supported, contributed [to], and assisted [with]. They prompt the question, "What precisely did you do?" Verbs

such as "created," "directed," "executed," "launched," "brokered," and "implemented" capture the reader's attention and convey focused energy.

**7. Track accolades.** Recognition (e.g., awards, time-off bonuses, and letters of appreciation) can be terrific bell ringers in a performance review. Based on the significance, you might include a concise quote, identifying the source by name or official title.

A standout performance alone may not promulgate promotion or selection for competitive opportunities. However, you can transform noteworthy achievements into a compelling case if you do your homework and make each word count. ■■



*Col. Carla D. Bass, USAF (Ret), is the author of the book *Write to Influence!**



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