

### 3.2 The Importance of Performance Objectives

Performance objectives (often referred to as goals or accountabilities) provide both the appraiser and the appraisee with the criteria needed to objectively discuss, monitor, and evaluate performance. Since employee objectives tie in with the objectives of the organizational unit or department and those of the company, performance objectives act as the cornerstone of effective performance management. Clear objectives prevent surprises during **Performance Summary** and **Development Discussions**.

Performance objectives:

- Provide an up-front, objective, mutually understood and mutually accepted basis for reviewing and discussing performance results.
- Reduce misunderstandings between the manager and the employee about what performance results he/she is expected to achieve.
- Specify each employee's role in accomplishing things that are important for the work unit and the organization.
- Help the employee to self-monitor progress by providing clear performance targets to aim for.

#### TYPES OF PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Consider what types of performance objectives are most appropriate for the employee's specific job for the upcoming performance period.

- **Short-range objectives** can be accomplished within the performance cycle—often within a few weeks or a few months.
- **Long-range objectives** might require a full performance cycle or longer to complete, (and will probably have to be divided into two or three objectives, or spread over several “milestones”).
- **Routine or maintenance objectives** will help you maintain performance at currently acceptable levels, or keep things at a minimum standard.
- **Organizational objectives** contribute directly to the wider organization (such as establishing a new procedure within a unit).
- **Problem-solving objectives** can be set to improve performance that has slipped below acceptable levels.
- **Innovative objectives** are created to stimulate creativity or new thinking, or take a fresh approach.
- **Personal development objectives** are meant to enhance the employee's development and his/her long-term performance results.

Whatever type of objective fits the situation, the process is the same: to establish clarity, relevance, and commitment. We will explore this process in the next section.