



## Your Voice Your Choice

OPEIU Local 39 Newsletter

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It's that time of year again. No, I'm afraid I'm not talking about spring and I'm not talking about scholarship application time (although it is that as well).

No, for many of us, it is Yearly Review Time! Have you gotten your review? Was it a good one? Was it worthwhile? Were you surprised by what was in your review? Surprises can be fun, but not in a review. If you got a surprise, there are things you can do.

SCFL Scholarship  
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### Quick Links

About the Annual  
Review

MS, GE, and the futility  
of Ranking Employees

10 Biggest Mistakes  
Bosses Make

### SCFL / AFL-CIO Scholarships

The South Central Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, are again offering a chance at a scholarship. If you have a child who has not yet earned a degree but is in school or will be starting school next fall, you should apply for these scholarships. [Click here for the Scholarship Application.](#)

### The Perils of Performance Reviews

There is a lot to talk about when it comes to performance reviews. Some of our bargaining units are in companies that seem to be still doing a version of the "Rank and Yank" which forces management to designate a specified percentage of employees into the worst designation, whether they deserve it or not. Hey, somebody has to be the worst, and it's your turn this year! ([Not even Microsoft is doing this any more.](#)) Unfortunately, such an arbitrary ranking system has real-world consequences. The Chief Steward at CMFG reports that disciplines are up in the first quarter. After reviews, there may be even more people facing discipline or "corrective action plans" that puts their work under the microscope. A very vague, very ill-written, and often frustrating microscope.

The situation is bad enough that the Union has filed a grievance with CUNA Mutual Group over bad reviews in that bargaining unit. The contract states that reviews are to be accurate and we're hearing that many have been anything but. If your review was inaccurate, and especially if it was a surprise with no prior indication of unsatisfactory work, we need you to contact the Union office. You can call at 608 257-4734 or [email](#).

[Most HR professionals think the yearly review is a waste of time.](#) Most employees I talk to feel the same way. With the yearly review, nothing good we've done ever gets mentioned beyond that review meeting and everything bad gets trotted out again and again and again. However, most of our members face a yearly review. Note that even those bargaining units who have reviews mentioned in their contracts don't say that a yearly review MUST be done. [There are far better ways to getting most out of employees,](#) but if management insists on having periodic reviews, then those reviews must be fair and must be about the employee's performance independent of anything else.

### **Surprise!**

The worst thing to happen with a review is that the results come as a surprise. That should NEVER happen. If it does, your manager has failed, both you and their responsibility to the company.

Unfortunately, too often the surprise review is negative, filled with such vague complaints that it is impossible to correct the supposed faults. "Doesn't communicate well" seems to be a favorite, as is "not meeting expectations for their job class." But what in the world do those even mean!?!?

You need to find out. A bad review is, unfortunately, something that can't be ignored. Most companies do reviews so as to have a "paper trail" of the employee's work record. This first bad review is your first time to get your side of the story out there. Use the space for your comments to, at the very least, note that you disagree with the review. If you have the space, detail what the review got wrong.

To begin correcting the record, you need to inform your manager that you want to have weekly meetings. Weekly meetings wherein you ask, specifically and in writing, what your tasks are to be and how welly you are accomplishing those tasks. Demand that their critiques of your work be in the same [S.M.A.R.T](#) format that they ask us to put our Performance Goals in (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant or Realistic, and Timely). "Needs to improve communication" as a criticism of performance provides none of those things.

The good news is **YOU HAVE A UNION!** Most of the bargaining units have Stewards that are there to help you navigate this new relationship you have with your company. They will talk to you about ways of creating that paper trail, they can help you understand next steps, and they can be on hand to ensure that your contractual rights are followed in any sort of disciplinary meeting. And again, the Union has already filed a grievance at CUNA Mutual Group. Contact the union office directly if you're in that bargaining unit and got an unwarranted bad review.



**Performance reviews in Hell.**

## Last Chance at the Survey

For the last couple of months, we've been soliciting your views on the Quarterly Membership meetings. Since February didn't result in a quorum, I'm guessing that there's more to say! We'll leave it open one more month and present the findings next month.

At a very high level, the preliminary results are the meetings could be a little earlier, a little shorter, possibly with a location that's closer to downtown. Do these ideas match what would

bring you to a meeting? Agree, take the survey and let us know. Disagree? Take the survey and let us know!

[Your opinion on the Quarterly Membership Meetings](#)

We hope that spring finds you well and facing the year with a good review behind you. If there are issues, remember, the Union can help. That's one of the things your dues pay for.

In Solidarity,

OPEIU Local 39

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