

Recognizing and Rating Northwestern Behaviors

Working in the area of performance excellence and assessment over the past several years, staff in Human Resources have identified what we call “Northwestern behaviors.” These are desired behaviors that are consistent with Northwestern’s goals and, if encouraged in and developed by our employees, will help make the University an even better place to work, learn, and live.

True success in the workplace depends both on **what** we accomplish and **how** we get things done. In the Performance Excellence Process, *what* we accomplish are **performance objectives** and *how* we accomplish things are **Northwestern behaviors**. Employees of the University are encouraged to demonstrate the following behaviors in order to successfully accomplish their performance objectives.

Coachability: Being receptive to feedback; willing to learn; embracing continuous improvement.

Collegiality: Being helpful, respectful, approachable, and team oriented; building strong working relationships and a positive work environment.

Communication: Balancing listening and talking; speaking and writing clearly and accurately; influencing others; keeping others informed.

Compliance: Honoring University policies and regulatory requirements.

Customer focus: Striving for high customer satisfaction; going out of the way to be helpful and pleasant; making it as easy as possible for the customer (rather than the department or the University).

Efficiency: Planning ahead; managing time well; being on time; being cost conscious; thinking of better ways to do things.

Initiative: Taking ownership of work; doing what is needed without being asked; following through.

Leadership (as applicable): Setting clear expectations; reviewing progress; providing feedback and guidance; holding people accountable.

Detailed examples of these behaviors — outstanding, effective, and needs improvement — follow.

Recognizing and Rating Northwestern Behaviors

Coachability

Needs improvement

Asks for little feedback from others on development needs and progress

Effective

Solicits feedback from customers, peers, and superiors, and uses this information to develop know-how and self-awareness

Outstanding

Uses feedback from others to make noticeable and noteworthy changes in his/her skills and productivity

Does not show an interest in learning new skills, technologies, and workplace trends

Displays curiosity and seeks opportunities to master new skills and knowledge

Anticipates learning needs and has a plan in place to meet those needs

Does not share learning resources or expertise with others

Shares learning resources and expertise (articles, web pages, books, professional contacts) with others to strengthen their knowledge

Known for valuing learning; finds time and space for helping others learn

Tries to cover up mistakes

Learns from mistakes

Shows team members how mistakes can be valuable learning opportunities

Has few or no goals/objectives for professional development

Sets achievable, challenging goals/objectives for professional development

Has a professional development plan to address ongoing short- and long-term learning needs

Needs more awareness of professional information that affects the University and his/her job

Keeps current on professional information that affects the University and his/her job

Anticipates major functional changes that affect his/her job and takes steps to prepare for them

Rarely takes part in developmental activities outside the workplace

Takes steps to improve expertise by joining professional organizations and participating in conferences and training as appropriate

Participates in leadership roles in professional organizations and conferences

Recognizing and Rating Northwestern Behaviors

Collegiality

Needs improvement

Acts as if own ideas and opinions are “the final word” and minimizes or ignores the team’s contributions

Effective

Values the insights and thinking that can be achieved by a team

Outstanding

Actively supports and implements team decisions and ideas and gives full credit to the team for successful outcomes

Most comfortable with team members who are similar to him/her

Interacts comfortably and effectively with other team members

Makes special efforts to ensure that all team members are respectful of one another and work productively together

Ignores or works against team decisions

Seeks group participation and consensus

Actively supports and implements team decisions

Displays behaviors that create conflict on the team

Displays behaviors that reduce team conflicts

Mediates and helps the team resolve team conflicts

Prefers to work alone and is reluctant to participate in team activities

Participates actively in group meetings and team-building activities

Volunteers enthusiastically to work on intra- and interdepartmental teams

Has difficulty building relationships to accomplish results

Uses formal and informal approaches to develop and build effective working relationships within and outside his/her own group and with multiple levels of the organization

Influences others who are not under his/her direct authority or control to accomplish results

Needs to show more sensitivity to the diversity of coworkers and internal and external customers

Relates well to others in the organization who differ in status, age, race, religion, gender, or disability

Adjusts interpersonal approaches to attend to the needs of diverse groups of people

Tends to get locked into his/her own way of looking at issues

Remains open to others’ points of view, even when they conflict with his/her own

Negotiates with others to reach a win-win outcome

Recognizing and Rating Northwestern Behaviors

Communication

Needs improvement

Effective

Outstanding

Interrupts others; does not listen attentively; comes across as condescending

Demonstrates respect for others by listening actively; demonstrates appropriate nonverbal behaviors; verifies understanding

Encourages and values input; shows an interest in others' needs and concerns even when under pressure

Fails to share pertinent information

Shares (accurate) information openly and honestly and in a timely and assertive fashion

Anticipates communication needs and shares information effectively with all levels of the organization

Speaks unclearly, which prompts recipients to ask for clarification

Speaks clearly; avoids vagueness, ambiguity, and mixed messages; demonstrates appropriate nonverbal behaviors

Promotes and uses candid and open speaking style

Written communication often contains errors

Presents facts and ideas accurately and clearly in writing

Notes and reports are often forwarded and cited

People tend to "tune out" this person during discussions

Proposes ideas persuasively in oral communication

People often enjoy listening to this person talk and are influenced by him/her

Uses oral communication when written would be more appropriate — and vice versa

Uses appropriate communication channels and length depending on message and audience

Uses exactly the right medium (e-mail, voice mail, in person) at just the right length depending on message and audience

Shares confidential information with inappropriate parties

Maintains confidence as appropriate

Sought after as a confidant

Demonstrates passive or aggressive verbal and/or nonverbal behaviors during conflict

Demonstrates assertive verbal and/or nonverbal behaviors during conflict

Resolves conflicts and opens lines of communication

Recognizing and Rating Northwestern Behaviors

Compliance

Needs improvement

Cannot explain consequences of noncompliance

Effective

Strives for full compliance

Outstanding

Seeks continual compliance improvements

Does not consider compliance in daily work and decisions

Identifies methods for achieving compliance

Uncovers and corrects causes of noncompliance

Bends the rules and “asks for forgiveness”

Follows University and regulatory policies/requirements unless exceptions are necessary and preapproved

Sought after by colleagues and “strangers” who want to know the correct way to do things

Does not comply with standardized processes and procedures

Complies with standardized processes and procedures

Has obtained appropriate certifications in work process improvement techniques

Recognizing and Rating Northwestern Behaviors

Customer focus

Needs improvement

Displays less than friendly and helpful behaviors toward customers

Effective

Demonstrates, with both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, a warm and friendly demeanor toward customers

Outstanding

Noted for displaying customer service behaviors that exceed customers' expectations

Rarely listens to or solicits feedback from internal or external customers

Solicits and acts on customer feedback

Visits or calls customers to find out what they are doing and what they need; stays abreast of developments that may be relevant to them

Slow to respond to customer needs

Responds to customer needs while adhering to departmental service-level standards and time frames

Frequently exceeds agreed-upon service levels and time frames

Does not admit to or recover from customer mistakes as quickly as desired

Admits to customer mistakes and corrects them quickly

Learns from customer mistakes so that they are not repeated in future interactions

Has few or no methods in place to track customer satisfaction

Has qualitative and quantitative mechanisms to track customer satisfaction

Works with other team members to find better qualitative and quantitative ways to track customer satisfaction

Sees difficult customers as obstacles beyond his/her control

Views difficult customers as opportunities to improve self, processes, and/or products

Seeks out customer problems and complaints and removes barriers that get in the way of meeting and exceeding customer needs

Recognizing and Rating Northwestern Behaviors

Efficiency

Needs improvement

Effective

Outstanding

Arrives late and/or unprepared for work

Begins work on time/prepared; schedules nonwork activities outside of work hours

Known for exceptional attendance record

Takes unusually long time or extra effort to complete regular work

Manages time well; delivers expected results with reasonable time and effort

Produces extraordinary results while rarely working overtime and without “working too hard”

Not conscientious about spending or accounting for department funds; does not work within budget

Conscientious about spending and accounting for department funds; works within budget

Conscientious about spending and accounting for department funds — and finds ways to save and recover money

Has a minimal understanding of key work processes in department and/or area

Understands key work processes in department and/or area and uses them effectively

Continuously strives to improve key work processes

Rarely applies quality or process improvement techniques within his/her functional area to improve results

Consistently applies process improvement techniques to work to improve quality and/or efficiency

Identifies benchmarks with others to find process improvement opportunities

Does not consistently measure the effect of process improvements

Measures quality improvements in his/her own work area or process and reports them to management

Helps others to develop measures for quality improvements in their own work areas

Recognizing and Rating Northwestern Behaviors

Initiative

Needs improvement	Effective	Outstanding
Requires close supervision, even on routine assignments	Performs work independently without being asked; takes ownership and follows through	Significantly exceeds expectations by doing more than is required and by initiating and implementing new projects
Operates in reactive mode; often does things only when asked	Anticipates problems; proactively addresses issues	Recognizes and seizes opportunities even if outside of normal job duties
Misses deadlines; often requests extensions	Meets deadlines	Pursues solutions to problems with a sense of urgency; beats deadlines
Adheres to ineffective methods after being asked to change	Generates innovative ideas, approaches, and solutions	Ideas are adopted by the department or the University
Fails to meet basic responsibilities	Fulfills all primary responsibilities	Seeks new challenges and secondary responsibilities
Does not help others beyond regular job responsibilities	Looks for extra ways to help colleagues and customers	Formally recognized for going “above and beyond the call of duty” (thank you notes, Northwestern Service Excellence Awards)
Takes little or no action when things go wrong	Offers to help work toward solutions when things go wrong	Takes charge and finds solutions when things go wrong
Cannot always be trusted to follow through	Earns trust by doing what he/she says will be done	Always does what he/she says will be done; is noted for trustworthiness and dependability

Recognizing and Rating Northwestern Behaviors

Leadership (as applicable)

Needs improvement	Effective	Outstanding
Has no mission or communicates mission unclearly to team members	Communicates a clear, compelling mission to team members and motivates them to achieve that mission	Motivates others in the organization to achieve mission
Does not use the Performance Excellence Process to enhance employee performance	Uses the Performance Excellence Process to set expectations, coach employees, and conduct annual performance reviews	Champions the Performance Excellence Process and uses it successfully to increase productivity and develop employees
Makes the majority of important team decisions	Encourages and supports team decision making and problem solving	Helps team develop more collaborative and productive ways of problem solving and decision making
Insensitive in dealing with employee mistakes or failures	Motivates others to perform by providing constructive and timely feedback	Encourages employee growth and achievement by emphasizing learning from mistakes and failures and building on successes
Viewed as uncomfortable, closed, or withholding when communicating	Communicates openly, honestly, and comfortably with others	Teaches staff better ways of communicating with customers, peers, and each other
Has a history of not selecting the right candidates for the job and/or not thoroughly orienting them	Selects the right people based on candidate's past experiences, successes, and fit to the area's culture and orients them to their jobs	Assesses talent well; people want to work with him/her