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.

Coachability

Needs improvement	Effective	Outstanding
Asks for little feedback from others on development needs and progress	Solicits feedback from customers, peers, and superiors, and uses this information to develop know-how and self-awareness	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

Collegiality

Needs improvement	Effective	Outstanding
Acts as if own ideas and opinions are "the final word" and minimizes or ignores the team's contributions	Values the insights and thinking that can be achieved by a team	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

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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

Compliance

Needs improvement	Effective	Outstanding
Cannot explain consequences of noncompliance	Strives for full compliance	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

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Customer focus

Needs improvement	Effective	Outstanding
Displays less than friendly and helpful behaviors toward customers	Demonstrates, with both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, a warm and friendly demeanor toward customers	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

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

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

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