Using CAP's Performance Feedback Form

Lesson Objective: Demonstrate use of CAP's Form 40, *Performance Feedback* as a management and leadership tool.

Desired Learning Outcomes (DLO):

1. Describe the purposes of performance feedback.
2. Demonstrate the correct use of the CAP Form 40.
3. Develop ways to incorporate the Performance Feedback Form as a tool for evaluating subordinates and as a self-assessment tool.

Scheduled Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Introduction

As a CAP officer or noncommissioned officer (NCO), you want to know what's expected of you, and you want to know how well you measure up to those expectations. You also want to have a way to track your progress and have confidence that your peers are receiving the same level of guidance and feedback.

As a commander or supervisor, you are also interested in expectations and performance. You want to have a tool by which you can define, measure and discuss expectations, performance, needs, and potential with the people who work for you. Oh and by the way, you also want to know what is expected from your bosses, and how well you measure up.

This is the essence of performance feedback. CAP cadets receive formal performance feedback with the use of the CAP Form 60 series "*Leadership Feedback.*" CAP senior members (officer and NCO) may receive the same through optional use of the CAP Form 40, "*Performance Feedback.*" This lesson will focus on the use of performance feedback for senior members.

1. Purposes of performance feedback

It's useful to begin our discussion with some definitions. Performance feedback is akin to performance appraisal, something that all of us who have worked for large companies, for government or for the military have been exposed to. One definition is, "the process of determining how well employees do their jobs with a set of standards and communicating that information to all employees[1]." This definition identifies three components critical to all performance systems:

- Standards

- Evaluation

- Feedback

Common uses of performance feedback

It's good stuff, but what to do with it? Performance feedback is for the primary benefit of both the commander/supervisor/mentor and the subordinate/staff member/mentee. A point that is sometimes lost is that the performance feedback is of equal benefit to the person giving the feedback and the person receiving it. This is because performance feedback can serve a variety of uses[2]:

- **General personnel decisions:** promotions, commander selection, committee member selection, special assignments, etc.

- **Identification of training and development needs.**

- **Expectations feedback**: how well the member is meeting defined expectations for performance and development.

- **Basis for rewards and awards**.

- **Information from which to evaluate the effectiveness of present programs**: an example here would be if one sees a trend among many members who have completed a course. The performance feedback tool can be used to determine if they benefitted from the training.

In its purest form, performance feedback is a holistic tool to help the commander/supervisor/mentor make a range of informed decisions about the member being evaluated. It also helps the member participate in those decisions by understanding where they are in their development.

What performance feedback measures

Whatever the method, performance feedback tools are basically designed to measure three things[3]:

- **Task outcomes**: how a member completes a given task or responsibility.

- **Behaviors**: how a member acts while performing their duties as well as how they interact among their fellow members, CAP's customers and the public.

- **Traits**: feelings or perceptions which may not be measurable. Such traits can be identified in terms of attitude, personality characteristics, assessment of empirical experience (without data to support the statement), or statements such as "a true team player."

2. Correctly using the CAP Form 40.

For the rater (how we will refer to the commander/supervisor/mentor for the remainder of the lesson), the work doesn't start when the Form 40 is called up on the computer. The work actually starts long before then, as the rater must decide why to use the Form 40 and define the expectations against which the member will be measured. Examples include:

- General member performance over a given period of time (say 6 months).

- Performance specific to duty assignment while in training status (in other words, their performance and attitude while learning and doing their job).

- Measuring what they know versus what the rater wants them to know (do they need more training).

- Performance specific to an activity (such as student Form 40s during a Region Staff College).

- Program-required feedback (such as Form 40 requirement in the Command Specialty Track and in Organizational Excellence 2.0).

It is at this point where the rater begins the conversation with the member being rated; and yes, it is a conversation. The rater and the member discuss expectations for the period of time being measured along with plans and expectations for the future. The rater discusses the purpose of the Form 40 tool to help the member understand how the form is used, how they are being evaluated, and what success looks like.

- *Top Tip*: Give a copy of the Form 40 to the member at the beginning of the evaluation period with Sections I-IV completed. Use it as a tool during the initial conversation and refer to it frequently yourself during the rating period so you can stay focused on what you want to measure. Ask the member to refer to it during the rating period as a beacon.

The Form 40

Let's take a detailed look at the Form 40.

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CAP PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK FORM

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

NAME		CAPID	GRADE	UNIT

II. TYPE. (A) ☐ INITIAL ☐ ANNUAL ☐ SPECIAL (B) ☐ SELF REVIEW ☐ SUPERVISOR FEEDBACK

III. DUTY TITLE

IV. PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK (Note: blocks checked below indicate how well the officer receiving feedback meets officer giving feedback's performance expectations. Raters **MUST** provide qualitative comments for each rating.)
DOES NOT MEET = Significantly failed to meet expectations; requires immediate corrective action.
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT = Performance does not meet some expectations; deficiencies exist that need improvement.
MEETS = Meets expectations, satisfactory performance relatively free of deficiencies.
EXCEEDS = Exceeds expectations; performance carried out in a superior manner.
FAR EXCEEDS = Performance is carried out in a far superior manner and is consistently of exceptional merit.

SECTION I: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Self-explanatory.

SECTION II: TYPE

Here there are several choices:

- **Initial**: a baseline evaluation for whatever purpose (be sure to note what the purpose is under "Additional Comments" on the reverse of the form.

- **Annual**: Used for annual evaluations when the evaluation is for a repeated purpose, such as for duty performance or general member progression.

- **Special**: Used for special events, activities or purposes, such as performance as a student at an extended course or for an additional duty assignment (be sure to note what the purpose is under "Additional Comments" on the reverse side of the form).

- **Self-Review:** Used when the member rates their own performance. Useful as a training tool and as a tool for discussion when compared to the supervisor's rating.

- **Supervisor**: Self-explanatory.

SECTION III: DUTY TITLE

Self-explanatory.

SECTION IV: PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK (the meat of the form).

The first part of Section IV defines the rating blocks:

- **Does Not Meet:** Significantly failed to meet expectations; requires immediate corrective action (*be sure to define corrective action required*).

- **Needs Improvement:** Performance does not meet some expectations; deficiencies exist that need improvement (*be sure to define corrective action required*).

Note with the above ratings: this is not the time for punishment. The Form 40 is not a punitive form and performance feedback is not a punitive action. The Form 40 is designed to help improve performance to defined and measured standards. If a member isn't meeting those standards, it's a time to first provide the resources and assistance to allow the member to rise to the standard.

- **Meets:** Meets expectations, satisfactory performance relatively free of deficiencies.

It's useful here to describe ways to improve performance even more, but also note that someone who meets expectations is doing their job and doing a good job of it. It's a good thing.

- **Exceeds:** Exceeds expectations; performance carried out in a superior manner.

- **Far Exceeds:** Performance is carried out in a far superior manner and is consistently of exceptional merit.

In both of these ratings, the member has gone above and beyond. The question is only to what degree.

All of these ratings are informed by and influenced by both objective criteria and subjective judgment. In other words, the *task outcomes, behaviors and traits* we spoke of earlier. Objective criteria can be readily (if not always easily) defined and described. Subjective criteria are more difficult because it may change over time and with changes in situations. It's often based on the rater's feelings and intuition.

The second part of Section 4 lists general criteria around which the rater and the member measure performance. Here, the rater uses the criteria as the foundation for tailoring specific expectations for the member being rated. For instance, one's expectations for a Master rated lieutenant colonel who has been in the program for 12 years are much different than a new second lieutenant just learning their first job.

Let's look at the first four items measured on the Form 40:

FAR EXCEEDS = Performance is carried out in a far superior manner and is consistently of exceptional merit.

1. Job Knowledge. Has knowledge required to perform duties effectively. Strives to improve knowledge. Applies knowledge to handle non-routine situations.		
Comments:	☐ Does Not Meet ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Meets ☐ Exceeds ☐ Far Exceeds	
2. Leadership Skills. Sets and enforces standards. Works well with others. Fosters teamwork. Displays initiative. Self-confident. Motivates subordinates. Has respect and confidence of subordinates and superiors. Fair and consistent in evaluation of subordinates. Complies with safety directives and fosters environment of safety.		
Comments:	☐ Does Not Meet ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Meets ☐ Exceeds ☐ Far Exceeds	
3. Professional Qualities. Exhibits loyalty, discipline, dedication, integrity, honesty, and officership. Adheres to CAP standards. Accepts personal responsibility. Is fair and objective.		
Comments:	☐ Does Not Meet ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Meets ☐ Exceeds ☐ Far Exceeds	
4. Organizational Skills. Plans, coordinates, schedules and uses resources effectively. Meets suspense dates. Schedules work for self and others equitably and effectively. Anticipates and solves problems. Delegates effectively.		
Comments:	☐ Does Not Meet ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Meets ☐ Exceeds ☐ Far Exceeds	

Note that in all of these criteria there are spaces for comments. The rater is required to add comments for all items graded. This helps both the rater and the member to better gauge actual performance and help the member to focus future efforts.

In the descriptions below, the letter H refers to a hard skill and the letter S refers to a soft skill. H skills are typically more easily quantified and S skills may require more description.

- **(H) Job Knowledge:** Has knowledge required to perform duties effectively. Strives to improve knowledge. Applies knowledge to handle non-routine situations.

- **(S) Leadership Skills:** Sets and enforces standards. Works well with others. Fosters teamwork. Displays initiative. Self-confident. Motivates subordinates. Has respect and confidence of subordinates and superiors. Fair and consistent in evaluation of subordinates. Complies with safety directives and fosters an environment of safety. *(One may question whether to complete the leadership skills section for a staff officer or member without a formal leadership role. Senior members by definition are leaders, especially in a cadet or composite unit. It's also true that leadership skills can be displayed by anyone, regardless of formal leadership role.)*

- **(S) Professional Qualities:** Exhibits loyalty, discipline, dedication, honesty and officership. Adheres to CAP standards. Accepts personal responsibility. Is fair and objective. *(In other words, embraces and lives the Core Values.)*

- **(H) Organizational Skills:** Plans, coordinates, schedules and uses resources effectively. Meets suspense dates. Schedules work for self and others equitably and effectively. Anticipates and solves problems, Delegates effectively.

5. **Judgment and Decisions.** Makes timely and accurate decisions. Emphasizes logic and information input in decision-making. Retains composure in stressful situations. Recognizes opportunities. Adheres to safety requirements. Acts to take advantage of opportunities.					
Comments	☐ Does Not Meet	☐ Needs Improvement	☐ Meets	☐ Exceeds	☐ Far Exceeds

6. **Communications Skills.** Listens, speaks, and writes effectively.					
Comments:	☐ Does Not Meet	☐ Needs Improvement	☐ Meets	☐ Exceeds	☐ Far Exceeds

7. **Equipment and Resource Management.** Ensures accountability for all aircraft, vehicles, communications and computer equipment.					
Comments:	☐ Does Not Meet	☐ Needs Improvement	☐ Meets	☐ Exceeds	☐ Far Exceeds

8. **Financial Management.** Has solid understanding of financial management. Ensures fiscal accountability over corporate funds and solvency. Maintains strong financial internal controls and compliance with regulations.					
Comments:	☐ Does Not Meet	☐ Needs Improvement	☐ Meets	☐ Exceeds	☐ Far Exceeds

- **(S) Judgment and Decisions:** Makes timely and accurate decisions. Emphasizes logic and information input in decision-making. Retains composure in stressful situations. Recognizes opportunities. Adheres to safety requirements. Acts to take advantage of opportunities.

- **(H) Communications Skills:** Listens, speaks and writes effectively.

- **(H) Equipment and Resource Management:** Ensures accountability for all aircraft, vehicles, communications and computer equipment.

- **(H) Financial Management:** Has solid understanding of financial management. Ensures financial accountability over corporate funds and solvency. Maintains strong financial internal controls and compliance with regulations.

What if the member doesn't have control over any equipment or funds? Don't fill out a grade box and note why the item wasn't graded in the comment section for the item, but please do not leave it blank. See below:

8. **Financial Management.** Has solid understanding of financial management. Ensures fiscal accountability over corporate funds and solvency. Maintains strong financial internal controls and compliance with regulations.					
Comments:	☐ Does Not Meet	☐ Needs Improvement	☐ Meets	☐ Exceeds	☐ Far Exceeds
Not applicable. Member does not have access to or use squadron funds.					

SECTION V: OTHER FEEDBACK:

V. OTHER FEEDBACK (To be completed ONLY by officer receiving feedback)					
Communication, Mentoring, and Guidance. The officer giving feedback provides necessary support, information, resources and guidance so duties can be performed effectively. Raters **MUST** provide qualitative comments for each rating.					
Comments:	☐ Does Not Meet	☐ Needs Improvement	☐ Meets	☐ Exceeds	☐ Far Exceeds

This section is unique in that it is completed by the member being rated (receiving feedback). Very much like 360-degree feedback, it represents the member's impression of the quality of guidance, expectations and feedback being provided by the rater over the rating period.

SECTION VI: NARRATIVE (since last review)

This section provides the rater with additional opportunities to comment on the member's personal and professional development complementing or adding to the specific areas evaluated in Section IV. It can form the basis for evaluation during the next rating period, provide highlights to be referenced when nominating members for awards, and provide a planning document for continued professional development.

VI. NARRATIVE (since last review)
1. CIVIL AIR PATROL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Comments:
2. ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SUCCESSES Comments:
3. STRENGTHS Comments:
4. SUGGESTED GOALS OR AREAS FOR CONCENTRATION/IMPROVEMENT Comments:

- **Civil Air Patrol Professional Development:** Here is where you can work with the member to schedule and set goals for their professional development. This can be formal courses such as Region Staff College, Officer Basic Course or Unit Commanders Course or more informal experiences such as conferences, specialty track development or outside courses.

- **Accomplishments and Successes:** This is self-explanatory and critical. The Form 40 should not be a negative experience or punitive. Every member does something well, has improved in some way or has moved forward. It's important to discuss that.

- **Strengths:** See "Accomplishments and Successes" above.

- **Suggested Goals or Areas for Concentration/Improvement:** Just as it's important to point out the positive, it's also important to encourage the member to do even better. Stretching the member is a good way to view this. Everyone is human and everyone can improve: not a platitude, just a fact. With that in mind, it's important to point out that the Form 40 process, while a positive experience, is also an honest one. Almost every member wants to stretch and become even better. This is the place to define that. This is also a time for a conversation with the member to determine their goals.

SECTION VII: Additional Comments

Self-explanatory.

3. Incorporating the Form 40 into the normal routine.

Introducing the Form 40 into the normal management routine should be a well-thought process. Leadership and members alike may have some misgivings about using performance feedback, so communication and education is key to success.

Common myths

There are some common myths about using the Form 40 and if raised they should be openly discussed.

1. *"You can't evaluate volunteers. They'll quit."* This is not necessarily true. Most members want to know how well they are doing. It depends on how the system is set up, the level of trust in the unit and how well expectations are weighed and measured. Key here is trust. It's important to share with everyone that *task outcomes, behaviors and traits* are being measured, not the worth or the dedication of the individual.

2. *"It's going to be used against the member."* This is a variation of the myth above. The Form 40 *Performance Feedback* is not and should not be a punitive experience.

3. *"It's going to pit us against each other."* Absolutely not. This feedback is between the rater, the member and the commander.

4. *"They are to be retained for the career of the member."* How long a Form 40 is retained depends on the purpose of the evaluation. For instance, if completed for students at a course, the course director may elect to destroy them after the course. If they are used to supplement specialty track training, the mentor may elect to destroy them after the rating has been achieved. If completed as part of the normal squadron experience, the commander may select his/her own time schedule.

- *Top Tip:* If retained by the unit, only keep two copies: one for the commander stored securely and separately; and the other for the member to hold onto as they desire.

5. *"Ratings will be inflated/deflated."* If managed correctly from the beginning this risk should be minimized. Remember, the Form 40 isn't used in a competitive way. The purpose of the feedback is to make CAP's dedicated members even better than they already are and they're pretty great.

6. *"It'll take too much time."* One person cannot do this by themselves, it's true. There are some ways to spread the work and spread out the time to make it easier to develop a routine:
   a. *Use several raters: Deputy commanders, department heads (officers who have assistants), PD officers, etc can all help spread the load.*
   b. *Spread out the feedback process over time: do a couple every month and establish a cycle. Alphabetical order, by rank, by birth month, whatever.*
   c. *Get comfortable with the process before instituting it: if other units have been doing the form 40 process for awhile, ask them about best practices. Think about*

any performance evaluations to have at work (if you receive them) and about what you like or dislike about the experience.

    d. *The process can actually save time by allowing the rater/commander to lay out goals and expectations to the unit so that the unit is working toward a common purpose.*

Enhancing the Form 40 process

Taking advantage of the Form 40 process as a management tool can be improved in other ways:

1. **Phase in its implementation**: Try optional/mandatory participation, command staff/staff officers/new members; self-assessment/rater assessment or other method to introduce performance feedback.

2. **If a rater, once you've completed the review for a member**; set it aside for 24 hours. Read it again, and decide if you want to refine it before having the discussion with the member rated.

CREATING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

In addition to assessing the member and using the Form 40 tool, the rater also creates an environment for providing effective feedback. The performance review process is a two-step process. The first part of the feedback is using the Form 40. The second part, but of equal weight is the face-to-face discussion the rater has with the member.

Following are just a few tips for creating the right environment:

1. **Always have a face-to-face discussion with the member being rated**: This should never be done by e-mail and it should never be skipped. If rating someone from a distance; try to meet the member to have an in-person discussion. Using a telephone (while the parties can at least hear each other) should be an absolute last resort.

2. **Write a little outline about how you should approach and discuss performance feedback with the member being rated**: It's never a good idea to have this discussion "off the cuff."

3. **When conducting the feedback interview, be aware of body language and verbal/non-verbal cues:** both the member's and yours. Be aware of defensive language and body posture. Practice active listening because it's a two-way conversation. Think of this as an informational counseling session.

4. **Conduct the session out of earshot of other members.** It may be impractical or unwise to conduct performance feedback sessions totally in private; however, the conversation should be conducted in such a way that no one else can hear what's being said or read the appraisals.

5. **When conducting the feedback session; make it the only thing you and the member being rated are doing**: this is a critical conversation; give it your complete attention.

6. **Remember that performance feedback is about the past, present and future:** The Form 40 process necessarily is a review of past performance; but it also talks about the member's current status. Often overlooked but critical to the member's development; the process is also a conversation about where you and the member want to go in the

future. At least 1/3 of the time spent in the review conversation should be about the member's future and your vision of it. It should include:

    a. Your expectations.
    b. The training the member should receive to meet them.
    c. Performance goals.
    d. Timelines.
    e. Support they can expect from command.
    f. Their thoughts.
    g. Follow-up dates and times.

THE FORM 40 AS A SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

At the beginning of the lesson, we discussed how (as a rater) it was wise to give a blank Form 40 to the member being measured at the beginning of the rating period so that the member can compare their impressions of their own performance with the rater's. Now let's discuss the same idea from the point of view of the member being rated.

A great way to start getting comfortable with performance feedback and with the Form 40 in particular is to use it as a self-assessment tool. In using this approach, you can learn more about yourself as well as get an idea of what CAP expects from its officers and NCOs as an institution. This will give you a head start in improving your own performance.

When conducting a self-assessment, it's important to be completely honest with yourself: no one else will read what you write unless you want them to. The idea is to gain a clearer understanding of expectations, goals and performance.

You might find that you are being harder on yourself in an area than the rater; or you might find that the rater wishes you to improve in an area you think is fine. You might find that both instances might be true in the same feedback session.

Keep copies of your self-assessments (and actual performance feedback) over time so that you can see trends and progress.

As you begin to rate other people, review your self-assessments and performance feedback to gain insight into how to effectively document the findings you make.

Lesson Summary and Closure

The Form 40 Performance Feedback tool is a great resource for commanders, supervisors and members alike. It helps commanders and supervisors define expectations and measure member performance.

Keys to the success of performance feedback are education about the tool, buy-in, consistent application and honest and open communication. It can enhance the member experience and assist command in developing future leaders. Finally, it helps the members discover how they can take their service to the next level.

EXERCISE: Perform a self-assessment on yourself using the CAP Form 40. Bring it with you to class for discussion or be prepared to upload it in the online course. This is a mandatory activity.