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INTRODUCTION

Effectively providing feedback or coaching performance occurs when an employee and manager work together to ensure a good job is done and results are achieved. This is achieved when both know what to do and how well to do it. It provides additional opportunity for communication between managers and employees but in no way replaces the need for effective day to day communication and management.

The principle behind any performance management process is that giving feedback is crucial to working with people as it is an essential element of learning. Feedback motivates people by giving them a sense of achievement when it is positive, and provides an opportunity to improve any shortcomings when it is not. Effective feedback can improve performance and commitment.

The characteristics of effective feedback are that it is well-timed, constructive and done in line with the employee's needs and character.

There are a number of steps that will ensure that you provide feedback effectively to your team and to individuals:

SETTING DIRECTION

Anyone who has ever run a business, or coached a team knows how difficult it is to get everyone heading in the same direction.

Employees may know that they have a position description but they may not fully understand the performance expectations of them.

To get the most out of your team, make sure they know the team's objectives and the expectations that you have of their performance.

Setting Expectations up front

During Induction go through the Position Description for the role and explain the expectations of the job. These of course should align with what was explained in the interview.

Another important document to go through at Induction is a Performance Feedback Form which should be closely aligned with the Position Description. Explain to the employee that you will be reviewing them using the Performance Feedback Form towards the end of probation. If they pass probation that you will be reviewing them using the form every 6 to 12 months.

Team Meetings

Hold regular staff meetings. They only need to be 10-20 minutes long. Aim to achieve two way communication with you and your staff.

What is the purpose of meetings?

- Give people information about the business in general; it's goals, challenges etc
- Solve problems
- Discuss ideas
- Explain something
- Report on progress
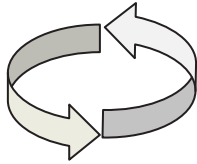- Share information

What can go wrong at meetings?

- Can be slow/frustrating
- Often go "off track"
- No decisions are made - or they are unclear
- Go on too long
- Dominated by a few people
- Get bogged down in trivial issues
- People don't say what they think
- Fights
- No follow up
- No record of decisions made
- No agenda to tell what will be discussed

Suggestions for making your meetings effective

- Dates of future meetings (not just the next meeting) are set well ahead so that people can make arrangements to attend and can record the information in their diaries
- Make sure everyone has a chance to contribute
- Decide on the purpose of the meeting and stick to it
- Use minutes and agendas
- There are time estimates of how long each agenda item should take
- Have a chairperson to keep the meeting on track
- Listen to people
- Draw out quieter members, by asking direct questions
- Furniture is arranged so everyone can see everyone else.
- At the front of the room, there is a place to record ideas, preferably on a flipchart so that the information can be saved.
- At least once or twice during the meeting someone asks, "How are we doing on our meeting process today? How can we be more productive?"
- Those in attendance consider whether anyone else should be involved and, if so who
- At the end of the meeting, people review who will be doing what before the next meeting

Displays

Use graphs or a wall chart to display team results against objectives. Visual information has an important role in focussing people on the things that need tracking and can show trends.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Feedback can be of a positive or negative nature. We generally don't like giving negative feedback because it may be construed as being nasty or insulting. Also, we find difficulty in receiving and handling negative feedback because of the possible effects upon our self esteem.

Either way positive or negative feedback is part of the job.

Some of the situations in which it may be appropriate to provide feedback are to correct mistakes, to recognise a person's accomplishments and to offer encouragement and support.

How should we provide feedback?

Regardless of whether we need to give positive or negative feedback, certain basic rules need to be considered when constructing and giving feedback.

- Specifically describe the problem you have observed
- Focus on the problem not the employee
- Indicate why it is a concern i.e. implications on the department
- Discuss the causes of the problem - find out the whole story
- Ask for the employee's help in solving the problem. Identify and write possible solutions
- Decide on specific action to be taken - by you and the employee
- Agree on a specific follow-up date

Preparation

If you have the time, prepare what you want to say and the order in which you want to deliver the information. Write key points down to prompt you about what you want to cover. Have your facts in front of you.

If you haven't got time to do this, try planning in your mind what you want to say. Also, identify to yourself what you want the outcome of giving the feedback to be.

Time and Place

An appropriate time to give the feedback should be selected. If you or the other person are stressed, in a hurry, upset or angry don't give the feedback straight away. However, don't leave it too long before addressing the situation.

Giving feedback too long after the occurrence will reduce the impact and credibility you want the feedback to have.

If the feedback is of a sensitive nature take care about where you give it. As a general guide, the more serious the situation the more private the surroundings should be and the more you should take care to avoid being overlooked, overheard and interrupted by others.

Questioning

Where giving feedback is important to use open and closed questions. Open questions start with how, where, who, what and why and will enable a lot more information flow than closed ended questions. Closed questions have single word (yes/no) or factual answers.

By using a mixture of open and closed questions you will be able to collect the information you need while at the same time, gaining an understanding of how the other person is accepting and dealing with the feedback that you are giving.

Non-verbal

When giving feedback it's important to be aware of your own non-verbal behaviour and the non-verbal behaviour of the other person. If the person you are giving feedback to is fidgeting, looking out the window, frowning or shaking their head, then there are some cues that they are not receiving the feedback well.

If you are aware of these non verbal behaviours and adjust your discussion to accommodate them. For example, if the person appears to be nervous, you first need to make an effort to calm the person before beginning the feedback.

State facts clearly

When providing feedback, state the facts as clearly as you can and identify how you feel about the situation. When stating opinions or feelings make sure you indicate that these are opinions/feelings by using "I" statements.
For example
> I think that
> I feel because
> It seems to me that

Use explicit language. State exactly what you mean. If you are not clear or imply a message, the other person may misinterpret the message you are trying to get across.

Honesty

When giving feedback stick to describing what specifically you have observed or experienced rather than evaluating the other person.

Concentrate on the problem or behaviour, not the person.

By concentrating on the specific problem or behaviour you will assist the person to understand why the feedback has been given. For example, if you say,' the person knows that you are happy with them but doesn't know specifically what they did well'.

It would be better to say, you did a great job in organising that last minute delivery this morning. I especially liked how you used your initiative and sent out the revised delivery schedules to clients." This statement tells the person what especially you liked about the event.

If you are not clear and specific when giving feedback the other person may not change their behaviour because they will think that their current behaviour is appropriate and will not understand the need to change. Your lack of honesty may result in you having to handle a worse situation later down the track.

Consistency

Giving feedback means being consistent with your messages.

Conflicting messages, no matter how well intended, affect us later in life because we continue to be unsure as to the direction we should take.

Handling Difficult Situations

Defensiveness
- Describe the situation as a problem to be solved rather than criticising the employee for poor performance
- Listening to people and "showing" that you understand what they are saying reduces defensiveness
- People do not feel like they are being attacked in a joint problem solving discussion

Disagreement
- Listen openly; do not become defensive or argumentative
- Check to make sure you understand the reasons for disagreement
- Use empathy
- If you need time to gather more information, reschedule the discussion

Apathy
- Ask a question about a known interest or accomplishment and build on it
- Ask open-ended questions
- Reinforce open-ended questions
- Reinforce the importance of two way communication

Anger
- Let the employee "vent" emotions; listen patiently
- Maintain or enhance self esteem
- Remain calm; don't get into an argument
- If necessary, reschedule the review discussion

Chance to respond

When giving any type of feedback always give the receiver of the feedback a chance to respond to what you are saying. This doesn't mean giving the person the opportunity to make excuses or wiggle out of things, it means encouraging the person to contribute to both your and their own understanding of the situation. Use phrases such as "What do you think?" or "How do you see that?" These phrases invite opinions.

Active Listening

Active listening is effective listening. About 45% of the time we spend communicating with people we spend listening to them. Studies have shown that we can hear about nine things at once - but we can only effectively listen to one thing at a time. Our minds are working overtime, taking in, sorting out, recalling, etc.

Although all of us would say that we try to be good listeners - there are many reasons why sometimes we're not such good listeners. Some common barriers to active listening are:

- we want to talk rather than listen - interrupting
- we are thinking of what we want to say next
- we keep doing what we are doing while we are supposedly listening - pretending
- we focus on one thing they have said - and get the wrong idea as a result
- we misunderstand the other person
- we don't like what is being said - so we switch off - judging/biasing
- jargon is used
- we're uninterested in the topic
- we're day dreaming

Our jobs involve lots of listening. We need to listen to our customers and in particular our team members - because these people make the group achieve. If they have problems or concerns then we really need to listen and deal with it effectively if we are to maintain both staff and customer morale. Listening is most important as a leader because you need to deal with issues that affect projects, peers, others etc. Listening is the best way to find out what is going on and then find solutions to potential problems

Tips for active listening

- Be physically comfortable - be natural, face the speaker
- Make eye contact - be natural, don't stare
- Be a whole body listener - face the person directly
- Eliminate distractions - personal mannerisms, other interruptions
- Encourage - nod, smile, lean forward
- Use expanders - ask for more information, or ask for an example
  Stop what you are working on
  Wait before responding - make sure you have the whole story
- Check your understanding of the issues before responding "If I understand you correctly you feel..."
- Be patient
- Ask for clarification if words are used you don't understand
- Acknowledge people's feelings

Summary

If staff's performance is below or above expectations then there is a *performance gap.*

Gaps should be discussed with employees so that corrective action can be taken. The gap is important because it will form the basis upon which discussion will take place.

Performance gaps will be about:

- behaviour of an employee - i.e. what they say or do (something you hear or see)
- a work target which is not being met.

Feedback on performance gaps should be given non-defensively (neither aggressively nor passively). Performance problems are more likely to be solved through two-way communication

MAKING A TIME TO REVIEW PERFORMANCE

A performance appraisal is a planned review of performance between the employee and the manager. The manager and the employee will discuss performance against key job criteria which are often found in the position description.

Staff need to know if they are not meeting standards required, or if they are doing things incorrectly. They can't change their behaviour if they do not know that their performance is not up to standard. They should also be told when they are doing something well. A pat on the back for good work is a great motivator.

Part of your job as a coach is to give feedback every day, however it is important to put some time aside to do a formal review every 6 months or so.

In the case of a dispute regarding unfair dismissal, it is important to have a history of performance records to help support decisions. From this perspective, performance appraisals are a critical part of management.

Using a performance appraisal form will assist in building a history of effective performance review.

Other benefits of a performance appraisal include:
- chance to dedicate some time to face to face discussion on performance
- identify obstacles to performance
- redirect focus
- Plan for support/ training/ development/ coaching
- Opportunity for employee to raise concerns

Preparing

- Give the person notice of when the review will occur so they can prepare.
- Give staff member the Performance Appraisal Form at least one week prior to the scheduled time for the review. Explain the form if necessary.
- Set aside an adequate block of uninterrupted time and arrange a private area.
- Go through the performance appraisal form for the job. Make an initial assessment as to whether the employee has performed the job responsibilities "well" or "needs improvement"
- Prepare draft notes to support your assessment
- Determine the persons performance strengths/weaknesses and:
  o prepare specific, unbiased documentation
  o identify possible improvement areas in case the person needs assistance in preparing a suitable development plan

Team member input

The employee considers how they think they have performed. Employees should raise any problems or concerns that they may have encountered in performing a specific activity. This column allows the employee to give a personal perspective on why a job area may be being performed less than adequately. It acts as a reminder to the reviewer who may only see the outcomes and not what is happening on a daily basis.

Conducting the discussion

- Find an office or quiet place and Divert the telephone.
- Plan to begin the discussion by creating a sincere, open, friendly atmosphere, this includes:
    - reviewing the purpose of the discussion
    - making it clear that it is a joint discussion
    - striving to put the employee at ease
- Ask the employee how they went against the assessment criteria.
    - ask them to elaborate on why they did well or why they need improvement
    - Give them some feedback from your perspective against the criteria.
    - give specific example of performance (good and bad)
    - share your rating against the criteria
- Agree on the rating
- Where the rating is "needs improvement", decide on a development or improvement goal.
    - encourage the employee to outline their personal plans for self development
    - before suggesting ideas
    - strive to reach agreement on appropriate development plans which details what the employee intends to do, by when and the support required
- Be willing to ask the employee to provide feedback on your management style, whether they feel supported, and your general performance as a manager

Closing the discussion

- Be prepared to make notes during the discussion. In closing:
    - summarise what has been discussed
    - give the employee an opportunity to make additional suggestions
    - end on a constructive note

After the interview

- As soon as the discussion is over, summarise plans made, points requiring follow-up, commitments made and provide a copy to the employee.
- Evaluate how you handled the discussion - what you did well/ what you need to improve.

Common problems with a 'formal' Appraisal

- The person is not put at ease - they don't know what to expect
- The person gets little opportunity to express themselves - you talk too much
- The person feels unfairly appraised and is afraid to disagree
- You use criticism more often than praise
- You become defensive when challenged

Skills a manager needs for effective performance review

- Practise providing feedback 365 days a year, not 1 hour every 12 months
- Identify issues in relation to specific behavioural facts rather than personality or generalisations
- Discuss issues the employee can change or build on strengths
- Give feedback on all situations, including negative
- Ask questions, rather than always giving your point of view. Allow the employee time to think
- Be open-minded and prepared to listen and change point of view
- Be aware of body language (self and employee)
- Prepare, work out what has and hasn't been achieved, and think of areas for development and growth

PROVIDING FEEDBACK FORM FOR A DRIVER

Name:	Job Title:	Manager:	Date:

Review Type:

☐ Probationary Review   ☐ 6 month review   ☐ 12 month review

Rating Key:	1=Unsatisfactory, 2=Below Expectations, 3=Competent/ meets expectations, 4= Exceeds expectations, 5=Outstanding

Please select one rating from each of the Performance Criteria below which reflects overall performance for the year in this area.

Safe and legal operation of a motor vehicle	**Rating Self**	**Rating Mgr**	**Significant Actual Achievements**	**Ideas for Improvement/ Coaching Comments**

Safe and timely transportation of the load from origin to destination	**Rating Self**	**Rating Mgr**	**Significant Actual Achievements**	**Ideas for Improvement/ Coaching Comments**

Proper loading and unloading of the cargo	**Rating Self**	**Rating Mgr**	**Significant Actual Achievements**	**Ideas for Improvement/ Coaching Comments**

TDTSA 2008

Accurate completion of all necessary paperwork related to truck operations and freight movements.	Rating Self	Rating Mgr	Significant Actual Achievements	Ideas for Improvement/ Coaching Comments

Professional representation of the company and the trucking industry through responsible driving.	Rating Self	Rating Mgr	Significant Actual Achievements	Ideas for Improvement/ Coaching Comments

Flexibility (Select one rating which reflects performance overall)	Rating Self	Rating Mgr	Significant Actual Achievements	Ideas for Improvement/ Coaching Comments
5. Can learn and does new jobs easily. Always willing. 4. Willing to be flexible and capable of performing new tasks. 3. Willing to learn new jobs and capable of performing them with average amount of instructions. 2. Requires close supervision and direction in new jobs. 1. Unwilling to learn new jobs. Finds difficulty adjusting.				

Attitude towards others (Select one rating which reflects performance overall)	Rating Self	Rating Mgr	Significant Actual Achievements	Ideas for Improvement/ Coaching Comments
5. Very courteous, cooperative, helpful and friendly to others. Effectively comprehends and appreciates supervision. 4. Courteous, cooperative, helpful and friendly. Willing to accept supervision. 3. Maintains cordial relationship with others. Accepts supervision. 2. Not consistent in relation to others. May be quarrelsome. Does not always accept supervision. 1. Discourteous and uncooperative. Resents any supervision.				

Attendance (Select one rating which reflects performance overall)	Rating Self	Rating Mgr	Significant Actual Achievements	Ideas for Improvement/ Coaching Comments
5. Perfect attendance and works extra hours at own initiative. 4. Perfect attendance. 3. Absent with certificate – up to X days per year. 2. Absent with certificate – exceeding X days per year. 1. Absent without permission on various occasions.				

Employee's comments

I understand what is expected of me and how my performance will be monitored and assessed

Signature: Date:

Manager's comments

Signature: Date:

DISCUSSING PERFORMANCE CONCERNS

We have looked at coaching and providing feedback for good performance and as part of a regular review/get together, but there may also be situations when you have to take charge and provide feedback on an immediate performance concern. Even for an informal performance discussion, it is important that we prepare and plan what and how the discussion is going to take place. Remember "if you fail to plan you plan to fail!"

1. Prepare your thoughts for the discussion (history, facts of the problem and relevant data should be collected prior to the discussion). Complete a discussion plan.

2. Give feedback on performance. Focus on what the performance concerns are and where the performance is short of requirements.

3. The team member must always be provided with the opportunity to respond to your feedback. Use active listening to demonstrate and check understanding. At this stage, you may determine that no further action is required.

4. If you need to continue the discussion, use open questions to establish what problem(s) are affecting performance.

5. Ensure there is agreement on the problem.

6. Use questioning to involve the team member in generating solutions to overcoming the problem.

7. Give feedback on solutions. Discuss how practical they are and where appropriate, express support.

8. Action plan what the team member must do and by when. Specify the acceptable standards of performance or behaviour required.

9. Make time for any review meetings. These will evaluate whether performance has improved and identify any further actions necessary. Make sure the review time set is reasonable.

10. When performance has improved, use positive reinforcement.

11. Review your own performance in leading the discussion and identify ways to improve next time.

I'd like a word with you- the "discipline" interview
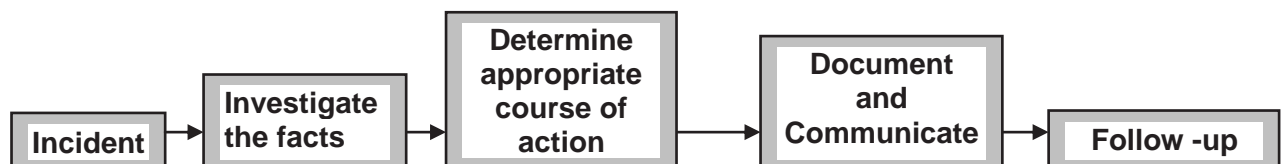
Discipline
1. Instructions imparted to disciples or scholars; teaching; learning; education; schooling
2. Instructions having for its aim to form the pupil to proper conduct and action
3. Correction; chastisement; punishment inflicted by way of correction and training

A discipline interview should be held if the need becomes obvious as a result of logical analysis of someone's behaviour or performance against the accepted standards for the job.

The steps to take are;

1. **Establish the Gap -** check the facts on the person's performance (personal files, clock cards, customer complaints, work sheets, unfinished work, budgets etc) and check the facts on your requirements (company rules, position description, Key Performance Indicators, performance records of others).

2. **Explore the reasons for the gap** - most people will approach such a discussion with sullen silence, aggression, petulance, bravado, or resentment. Choose a private place and be straightforward about the reasons for the discussion then ask open-ended questions to get the employee to state their case about the situation. Listen to the answers to determine if it is a personal problem or grievance (where you should hear them out and attempt to get to the cause of the issue and resolve or make a temporary adjustment in expectations) or discipline situation in which case you need to agree on an improvement plan and move to the next step.

3. **Eliminate the gap** - remind the employee of what is expected, and why this volume or standard of work is important or why the rules must be kept. Ask them what they are going to do about it then tell them how you will help them achieve this work standard (i.e. more training or information) and fix some improvement targets. In all cases you must fix a review date and explain what the procedural consequences will be if there is no improvement by this date. You should make it clear that you want the employee to succeed, and that you will be giving help and encouragement to do so during this review time.

Investigation and Disciplinary Procedures

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┌──────────┐   ┌────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐   ┌────────────┐
│          │   │            │   │  Determine   │   │  Document   │   │            │
│ Incident │ → │ Investigate│ → │ appropriate  │ → │    and      │ → │ Follow -up │
│          │   │ the facts  │   │  course of   │   │ Communicate │   │            │
│          │   │            │   │   action     │   │             │   │            │
└──────────┘   └────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └─────────────┘   └────────────┘
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Aim of Disciplinary Procedures

- to effectively deal with marginal or below standard performance or conduct
- guide managers towards fair and equitable outcomes
- to address performance problems at the time they occur
- to provide employees with a real opportunity to improve
- to ensure flexibility given the particular circumstances of each case
- to enable managers and employees to review and agree expectations for performance and development
- to provide guidance on how to improve

1. Investigation

It is crucial that all situations be investigated before the appropriate course of action is determined. All relevant facts must be considered objectively.

Gathering the facts - some helpful questions

Situation	Questions
Declining performance • Decreased productivity • Poor quality of work • Missed due dates • Disorganised • Doing small tasks first • Avoiding tougher jobs	What specific areas of the job is the employee not performing in? Has the employee been told how to do that part of their job? Has the employee received feedback in the past? What external influences might be causing decreased performance?

Unacceptable Behaviour
i.e.;
• Refusal to work as a team
• Rude tone to customers
• Increased complaining
• Refusal to approach customers
• Aggressive behaviour when faced with change
	What is it the person actually says or does that is unacceptable?
	    • do not settle for " an attitude problem"
	    • be specific about the behaviours demonstrated
	
	What is the actual impact on performance?
	
	What evidence is there to justify your conclusion?
	
	What do you want the person to do differently?

Skill Deficiency
i.e.;
• inefficient time management
• lack of product knowledge
	What is the skill deficiency? Can I pinpoint and define it?
	
	How does it impact on performance?
	
	Has the employee been trained in that skill/ knowledge area?
	
	Consider other reasons such as:
	    • skill/ knowledge used infrequently
	    • lack of feedback in how to use the skill effectively
	    • person does not want to use skill because it is dangerous/ boring

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NOTE: EMPLOYEE'S MUST HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND

It is imperative that during each stage of the investigation, counselling and disciplinary procedure, employees are informed of the specific allegations or complaints against them. Employees should also be given an adequate opportunity to defend themselves in the form of response to questions and by providing relevant information regarding any complaints PRIOR to any action being taken. For the employer this is extremely important in demonstrating that a fair process has been followed.

2. Determine most appropriate course of action

- Level of action should be seen as appropriate with regard to all circumstances
- Use your common sense

Note that these training materials contain advice of a non-legal nature and have been developed based on Chandler Macleod's extensive experience in, and understanding of, the Australian Human Resource market. There are elements of your relationship with your current and potential workforce which have legal implications, in relation to which you should take independent legal advice. For the avoidance of doubt, Chandler Macleod, in providing these materials, does not purport to provide you with legal advice and does not suggest that these materials negate or supplant the need to take independent legal advice.