

5 keys for successful follow up after a performance review

As a manager, scheduling regular performance reviews for your employees is a crucial component of both their success and the overall progress of the company. However, the real impact comes in how you follow up after the performance review. This part is often left out, but without proper follow up, you miss the opportunity to ensure that points mentioned in the performance review are correctly executed and that communication remains open. Here are 5 keys to following up after a performance review.

Set performance goals

The purpose of a follow-up session is to ensure that your employees are maintaining or improving their performance. This can only be done if there are goals in place to achieve. You want to set clear performance goals during each employee evaluation session, so those goals are tracked and reviewed during the follow-up sessions.

When setting goals, be sure that they are S.M.A.R.T. so both you and your employees can quickly determine whether the goal has been met or not. Also, you don't want to give too many goals at once. Consider focusing on the most important ones first or the objectives that most closely align with your company's overall strategic goal or mission for the quarter or year.

Goals should be designed to push your employees to achieve greatness, but not overwhelm them, so be sure that you aren't setting goals that are unrealistic or unachievable in the time frame provided. Doing so can add an unnecessary layer of stress to your employee's life, which is bad for the company culture.

Immediately schedule a follow-up

Being a manager requires that you wear many hats, which often leads to a packed schedule and a long to-do list. If you want to ensure that a follow up happens with your employees, one of the best things you can do is schedule the follow up at the end of the performance review. While it doesn't have to take place right after the meeting, planning it locks the event into your calendar and your employee's calendar, which makes it a priority and less likely for you to forget.

The recommendation is that you wait at least 30 days after the performance review, so your employee has time to implement recommended changes or to see if he or she continues to operate well based on what was discussed. It's up to you whether you prefer to follow up monthly or quarterly. It might be better to follow up monthly with those who have more strides to make so you can stay in regular contact.

Incorporate on the spot coaching

Keep in mind that your performance review follow up doesn't have to stick solely to your official meetings. It can be more impactful for you to provide on the spot job coaching when you see an opportunity throughout the day. This requires that you keep an eye on what's happening on the floor on a day to day basis. You don't have to do

so from an evaluative or micro-managing angle, but from the viewpoint of one who wants to see improvement.

When you can provide mini bits of feedback, both positive and negative, based on the performance review and goals that have been set, it can help them achieve those goals easier and build a better rapport between you both.

As mentioned, your coaching should also include positive feedback. Your employees want to know when they're doing well and when you see improvement in various areas. If they always feel that you focus on the negative, it will put them on guard which can lead to less improvement.

Compare progress

During your performance review follow up sessions, you want to compare the progress made by your employees. The best way to do this is to have all relevant notes and data available to reference.

It's beneficial when you can speak in specifics as much as possible, and having this specific information can help you do so.

Compare your original notes from the performance review with those taken leading up to the follow-up session so you can make a comparison.

Listen more

While performance reviews and follow up sessions are traditionally seen as an opportunity for you to share your thoughts and your opinions and your views, it's also an excellent time for you to listen to your employees.

Give them access to your notes, all of the data, and documented information. Ask for their feedback on the goals set and on how they think things are going. Ask them what they would like to see improved for themselves.

Your thoughts and opinions are not the only ones that matter, and you want to make your employees feel as though they are part of the process. This isn't the time to be a dictator; it's time to be a collaborator.

This is also a prime opportunity to learn why they might be struggling in certain areas. You can often find out about personal things or little things happening on the job that might be creating a barrier to success. If you can step in and provide support beyond what's traditionally recommended, you might be able to help your employees in a way that could lead to amazing results.

Be sure to consider your follow up performance review plan

There's no doubt that performance reviews are a crucial component of building a great team of employees who can perform at and beyond their expected level. Following up is the icing on the cake because it bridges the gap between annual employee evaluations. A lot can happen in a year when life, business, stress, to-do lists, and personal responsibilities get in the way.

When you implement the 5 keys mentioned above in your performance review follow up strategy, you can rest easy knowing that you're setting your employees and your company up for success with your approach.