PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK DISCUSSIONS

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK DISCUSSIONS?

Performance feedback discussions build confidence and competence, and given that people are your best resource, this is the perfect opportunity to increase the commitment and productivity of your workforce.

WHAT IS A PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK DISCUSSION?

Performance feedback discussions are a process for analysing and improving performance in the workplace. They do not replace feedback on “day to day” work issues. They are instead the formal middle step in an ongoing dialogue between an employee and their supervisor or team leader. They provide the opportunity to air any concerns, talk about career moves, explore learning opportunities and set goals for the year ahead. A good performance feedback discussion will leave both parties inspired to perform to the best of their abilities.

HOW TO CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK DISCUSSION

- Performance feedback discussions should be held in an atmosphere of trust. They are not a test or competition, so there should be no surprises or bombshells announced at them.

- When setting up the meeting, give people plenty of notice and make it personal by inviting them to the discussion yourself. It is always best to meet in a neutral environment and allow ample time. Discourage phone calls and interruptions during the meeting.

- Before the actual meeting, both parties should take time to prepare by working through the job description to make sure it is accurate. You should also familiarise yourselves with previous performance agreements, collate any notes from throughout the year and have a well thought out agenda.

- Start the meeting on a positive note, by acknowledging the person’s strengths and achievements. Describe the good behaviour in detail and make it personal by using the “I” word.

- You also need to be open to detail – let them tell you more. Do your utmost to encourage self-appraisal.

- Explore issues with open questions that begin with words like, “who, what, where and how”.

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How to Conduct a Performance Feedback Discussion

- Use your agenda to keep you focused and deal with one issue at a time.
- Talk about any weaknesses in terms of needs and learning opportunities.
- Practice your best listening skills; be attentive to the other person's perspective, resist the urge to speak yourself, show interest and acknowledge what they have to say. Then, summarise their point of view and set out to find solutions.
- Work on building consensus, setting goals for the year ahead and agreeing on outcomes.
- Towards the end of the discussion, it is important to emphasise, what you will do to support the person to achieve their goals and to re-enforce your commitment to their success.
- Once you have finished the performance feedback discussion, you should complete a written summary of the discussion, which includes agreed outcomes for the year ahead. Both parties should sign and date this summary and make no further additions without the consent of the other person.

And that's all there is to it.