



Types of Feedback Every Manager Must Master

Gallup says
managers must
meaningfully connect
with team members
at least weekly



If your organization struggles with high employee turnover and low employee engagement, you're not alone. Like most companies, you've probably tried countless solutions with minimal improvement. But a new study indicates that the solution to these challenges might be simpler than you think.

We know an employee's relationship with their manager has a direct impact on both employee turnover and engagement. employees want an authentic relationship with their manager that includes talking with them about both work and life. That means having the right kinds of conversations with their teams—at least weekly.

Here are the four types of feedback every manager must master to maximize employee performance.

1

Constructive, Ad-hoc Feedback

Employees crave feedback that's timely, constructive, and actionable--feedback they can apply immediately to achieve their goals and satisfy your expectations.

When delivering feedback, focus on the specific behaviors — never the person's character. For example, telling an employee that they're not detail-oriented can be perceived as an attack on their character. Instead, suggest how behavior can be changed. "Your bottom line will improve if you spend more time focusing on details," is a suggestion. The difference can be subtle, but it's vital.

To be constructive, feedback must be SPECIFIC. Don't expect people to understand the meaning behind your words. Use concrete examples and reference specific events. If a deficiency is occurring regularly, make sure those instances are documented so several examples can be shared with the employee to support your concerns. Always refer back to items raised in your conversation.

Finally, keep in mind that your goal is not to leave the employee feeling accused, but to feel motivated to deliver a higher level of performance. Suggest improvements that are reasonable and achievable, otherwise employees will feel demotivated and will not put in the effort to improve. Better yet, involve the employee in this process. Listen to and work with them to identify how they will improve and how that improvement will be monitored.



Developmental Coaching



In order to deliver effective developmental coaching, managers must establish clear expectations for an employee's role—both the business goals to be accomplished and how they can work most effectively within the culture. These goals should be clearly aligned with business priorities and documented, along with a roadmap for the employee's personal and professional development. Only with a thorough understanding of these expectations can there be appropriate context for feedback, coaching, and development.

Managers should frequently check in on their employees' personal/developmental objectives. While no one likes to be managed, everyone loves to be developed. And, of course, they love to be recognized at the end of a job well done. But it can be easy for managers to become so absorbed with their own to-do list that they forget to check in with employees about THEIR goals. Managers should spend significantly more time having forward-looking development conversations with each employee. Ideally, development goals are jointly created with progress tracked as closely as other business goals. With a continuous coaching approach, managers start to look more like coaches, providing timely, relevant feedback at just the right moments to maximize performance. Actively checking in with employees helps them feel invested in, and managers gain insight into their morale and job satisfaction.



3

Unstructured, Frequent Check-Ins

Eighty-six percent of employees report feeling dissatisfied with the pace of communication with their manager. These employees are likely missing out on frequent, informal connection points and conversations that support their workflow. Ideally daily, and at least weekly, managers should meet with employees to discuss what's on their plate—and on their mind.

However, if your one-on-one meetings solely consist of reviewing a to-do list then you are doing it wrong.

Frequent check-ins provide an evolving picture of how goals and projects are progressing across your team. Just make sure these conversations aren't ALL about work progress; that risks crossing the line into micromanagement, and nobody likes that. Check in about more general topics, make sure you include personal questions, and use these check-ins to build relationships. That means taking the time to listen more. Managers must be truly present and authentic with their employees. Leverage active listening skills and make space for honest, constructive dialogue that validates employees.

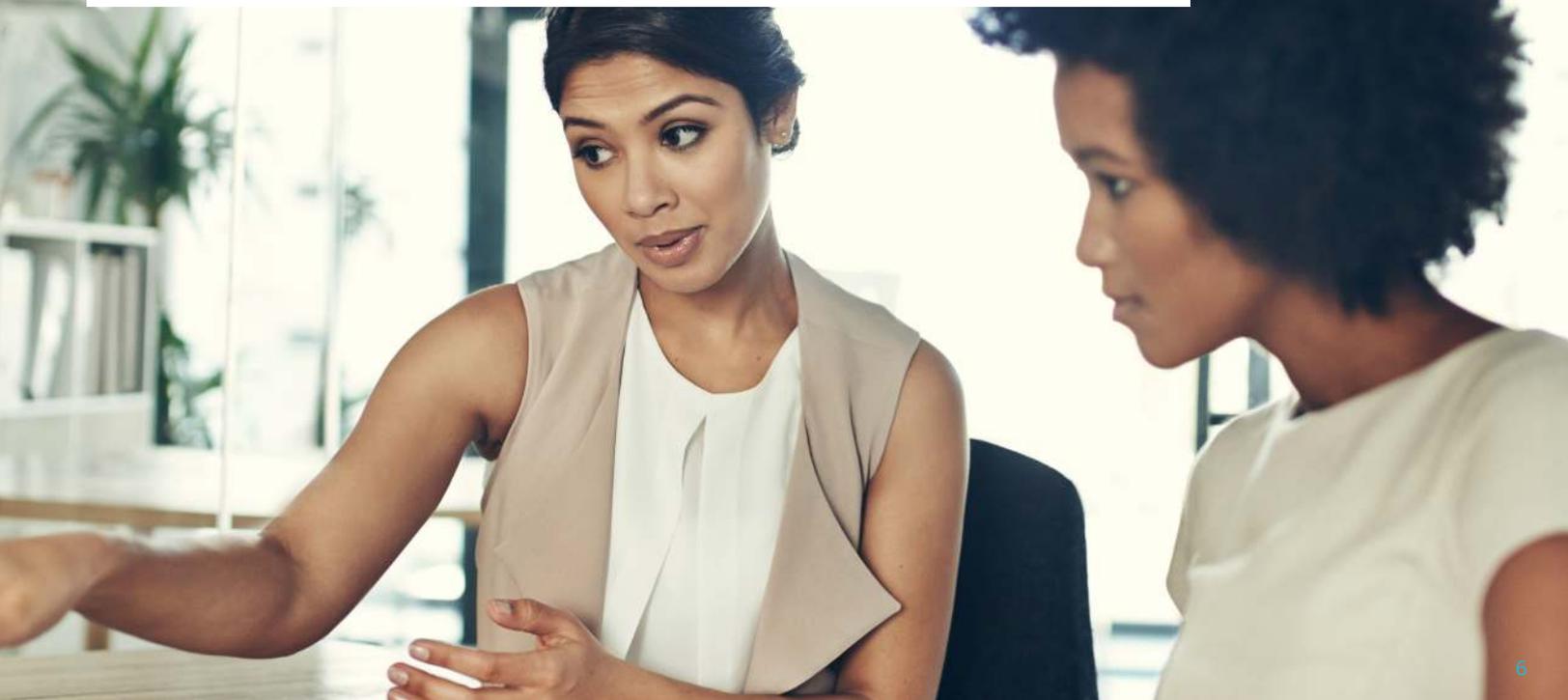


Formal Performance Reviews

4

For maximum accountability, there's still a place for the periodic performance review. These formal conversations tend to focus on progress and prioritization. Many follow a standard format and include questions that cover what was accomplished, what wasn't completed, and what are the current obstacles.

Managers should still be meeting with employees, ideally quarterly, to review long-term progress and goals. Best practice points to these happening 2-4 times a year to review long-term progress and establish new goals. These meetings should reflect the ongoing dialogue of the regular check-ins (so there are no surprises), but surface new development opportunities and jointly agreed upon goals and priorities.



Give Great Feedback, and Back it Up With the Right Tech

Improving employee feedback is a relatively simple solution to high employee turnover and low employee engagement, but that doesn't necessarily mean that delivering feedback is easy or even natural. Managers must make a concerted effort to build these skills. They must learn to recognize when ad-hoc feedback is needed--and deliver it effectively, without a lot of preparation. Managers must also make time for development coaching, frequent check-ins, and formal performance reviews. The return will be well worth the effort, as managers become more effective managers and employees become more engaged.

Betterworks can help deliver more effective feedback across your business. Flexible enough to support every organization's unique program, comprising goals, conversations, multi-source feedback and workforce insights, Betterworks helps organizations align work to goals, develop their employees and accelerate business growth.



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