

ALL TALK: PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS

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Continuous performance management is a two-part, interwoven process.

The first part consists of setting OKRs; the second entails regular and ongoing conversations, tailored to your needs.

Goal Planning and Reflection

To help facilitate this conversation, a manager might ask a contributor the following:

- What OKRs do you plan to focus on to drive the greatest value for your role, your team, and/or the company?
- Which of these OKRs aligns to key initiatives in the organization?

Progress Updates

To get the contributor talking, a manager might pose these questions:

- How are your OKRs coming along?
- What critical capabilities do you need to be successful?
- Is there anything stopping you from attaining your objectives?
- What OKRs need to be adjusted—or added, or eliminated—in light of shifting priorities?

Manager-led Coaching

To prepare for this conversation, the manager should consider the following questions:

- What behaviors or values do I want my report to continue to exhibit?
- What behaviors or values do I want the report to start or stop exhibiting?
- What coaching can I provide to help the report fully realize his or her potential?
- During the conversation, the leader might ask:
 - What part of your job most excites you?
 - What (if any) aspect of your role would you like to change?

Upward Feedback

To elicit candid input from a contributor, the manager might ask:

- What are you getting from me that you find helpful?
- What are you getting from me that impedes your ability to be effective?
- What could I do for you that would help you to be more successful?

Career Growth

To tease out a contributor's career aspirations, a manager might ask:

- What skills or capabilities would you like to develop to improve in your current role?
- In what areas do you want to grow to achieve your career goals?
- What skills or capabilities would you like to develop for a future role?
- From a learning, growth, and development standpoint, how can I and the company help you get there?

Prepping for Performance Conversations

Before launching a performance conversation with a contributor, some prep work is in order. Specifically, leaders should consider the following:

- What were the contributor's main objectives and responsibilities in the period in question?
- How has the contributor performed?
- If the contributor is underperforming, how should he or she course-correct?
- If the contributor is performing well or exceeding expectations, what can I do to sustain a high level of performance without burnout?
- When is the contributor most engaged? When is the contributor least engaged?
- What strengths does the contributor bring to the work?
- What types of learning experience might benefit this contributor?
- Over the next six months, what should the contributor's focus be? Meeting expectations in his or her current role? Maximizing contributions in the current role? Or preparing for the next opportunity—be it a new project, expanded responsibility, or new role?

Contributors, too, should prepare for performance conversations. Specifically, they can ask themselves:

- Am I on track to meet my objectives?
- Have I identified areas of opportunity?
- Do I understand how my work connects to broader milestones?
- What feedback can I give my manager?



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