



PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY & FEEDBACK

Online Course Content

MODULE I – OVERVIEW

Oregon state government has developed a comprehensive plan to update the state's current workforce philosophy and systems. This new philosophy and performance accountability system has been vetted with and is supported by the Governor's office, the Enterprise Leadership Team, and Agency Directors of the Executive Branch. It is the expectation that all supervisory managers will begin conducting quarterly check-ins with their employees and documenting those check-ins using Workday. The quarterly check-ins will replace the annual performance evaluation. This is a fundamental change in how, we, as one employer, will be doing performance management and will create a clear and consistent performance accountability system enterprise-wide.

The purpose of the Performance Accountability and Feedback training program is to provide managers with a simple process and tools to set clear expectations and performance measures, to effectively provide feedback and coaching, and to conduct quarterly check-ins with their employees.

Although a manager is only required to do four quarterly check-ins in a 12-month period, it is best practice to meet with your employees at the beginning of the year to develop or update the yearly performance expectations and goals.

This is the first module in a series of three modules all Executive Branch supervisory managers must complete. This module provides an overview of the Performance Accountability and Feedback model.

By the end of this module, you will:

- Learn about the enterprise values and competencies.
- Gain knowledge of the importance of accountability.
- Be able to recall the Performance Accountability and Feedback model.

Enterprise Values and Competencies

To attract, develop, and retain the kind of skilled employees capable of the service delivery transformation the Governor and Legislature envision, it is critical that Oregon state government empowers employees with the right tools, training, and support to accomplish their work and meet outcomes.

To address these needs, Oregon state government has adopted a set of enterprise-wide values and competencies to inform what characteristics and behaviors agencies should seek in their employees. The four enterprise values are integrity, accountability, equity, and excellence.

As public servants entrusted with state funds and resources, Oregon state government has adopted four organizational values that stretch across departments, boards, and commission to support this aim.

| VALUE | DEFINITION |
|----------------|--|
| Integrity | Be honest and transparent regardless of the situation. |
| Accountability | Own and take responsibility for the quality of outcomes for Oregonians. |
| Excellence | Collaboratively manage the resources we are entrusted with to achieve the best possible outcomes for Oregonians. |
| Equity | Commit to fostering an environment where everyone has access and opportunity to benefit accordingly. |

The values define our expectations, how we show up in our actions, and drive what our workforce and leadership will be known for (our reputation). The behaviors, skills, and abilities, also known as competencies, are what our managers need to meet those expectations.

There are six competencies tied into the values. Below are the definitions for each competency.

| COMPETENCY | DEFINITION |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Business Acumen | Demonstrated ability to evaluate the business implications of decisions and actions by continually having awareness of the business issues, processes, and outcomes as they impact the programs, work unit, and the organization's needs. |
| Communication | Demonstrated ability to effectively articulate and exchange information with internal and external partners. |
| Innovative | Demonstrated ability to actively engage with others to generate ideas to be evaluated, adopted, and implemented when appropriate. |
| Intentional Engagement | Demonstrated ability to recognize, seek out, engage, and integrate multiple perspectives, backgrounds, and values, in the performance of work roles and functions to effectively contribute to the organizational goals. |
| Mentoring & Developing People | Demonstrated ability to actively share their knowledge, skill, and expertise to help others recognize their potential and support individual and team growth. |
| Stewardship | Demonstrated ability to responsibly utilize allocated resources and identify when resources are needed or could be reallocated in support of organizational goals. |

Accountability

Accountability is an essential ingredient of success for both organizations and individuals. It is an individual value, and there sometimes can be a disconnect between what accountability means to each person. Webster's dictionary defines accountability as "an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions."

In the world of employment, we plan for our work and then have different checkpoints where we need to report or account for our results. As public employees for Oregon state government, we are all stewards of public resources and are held accountable to meet the expectations for the citizens we serve.

There are a few tips to keep in mind when holding employees accountable.

- When implemented effectively, holding people accountable is 90% communication or problem solving and only 10% discipline. When you need to have an accountability conversation, most of the interaction should be about resolving the issue and helping the employee become successful, not disciplining them for what has occurred.
- Interactions of this nature may result in an employee becoming emotional. Accept this is possible, know you can handle it and most importantly, understand change can't take place without emotion.
- Although accountability is really up to an individual employee, it is up to you as a manager to put the tools in their hands so they can fulfill their potential. Holding others accountable is something managers must do, so learning to do it well takes practice even if it is uncomfortable for you. It becomes easier and more comfortable when you consistently set expectations and hold employees accountable to those expectations.
- An important key to success is having the conversations regularly with employees about your expectations so accountability becomes part of your normal and expected dialogue. This minimizes the "fear" factor, allows you to recognize success regularly, and reinforces your expectations. Even the language you use in emails or meetings can set the expectations. For example, establish deadlines when you give assignments in email by stating "Please get back to me by COB on Thursday with your comments." This establishes your expectations. To let people know deadlines are important to you, follow up if you haven't heard back by COB on Thursday.
- As a manager, it is your responsibility to set your employees up for success. You need to define your expectations and then hold your employees accountable for those results.

Overview of the Performance Accountability & Feedback Model

Performance accountability is a communication practice by which managers are accountable for establishing and adjusting performance expectations and job goals, identifying development opportunities, giving ongoing feedback, and coaching, recognizing and evaluating performance results.

As a manager, you likely conduct these activities on a daily basis for your employees without even thinking about it. When you hear performance management or performance appraisals you may be thinking those are time consuming and offer minimal value. Implementing the Performance Accountability and Feedback model, will integrate the daily activities you are already doing into a simple process for documenting outcomes on a quarterly basis, thus doing away with the annual performance evaluation.

By managing your employee performance more effectively, you will have more time to accomplish your own work. While performance documentation will need to be created and maintained within Workday, most of the activities surrounding performance accountability and feedback are completed outside of Workday.

Because Oregon state government is one employer, how we hold employees accountable and manage performance should be consistent across the enterprise. The Performance Accountability and Feedback model consists of the following phases:

1. Planning
2. Monitoring
3. Giving quarterly performance feedback sessions

It is important to see all aspects of the model and realize this is meant to be a system. Each phase is cyclical, so as you finish one, you will begin the next and each one will build upon each other. For each of your employees, you will go through each phase over a 12-month time period, and you will need to determine when you will document the four required quarterly feedback sessions. This process will replace the annual performance evaluation that you do for your employees.

Planning

The first phase is planning where you will be looking at the priorities of the agency, division, and/or work unit over the next year and tying those priorities into the work and expectations of your employees to accomplish those priorities.

The planning phase includes the following steps:

- Reviewing the agency's strategic direction.
- Reviewing and updating the position description.
- Reviewing and updating performance expectations.
- Development planning and goal setting.

The employee will ultimately be the one to do the work, so involving them in the planning process is very important. It is best practice for the manager and employee to meet in-person to do the yearly planning. This will allow them to provide input on the yearly performance expectations and goals and identify where they might need support or resources.

Monitoring

The next phase is monitoring performance. Regular check-ins with employees and staying in touch on their projects, goals and milestones will help ensure not only their success but also provide an effective venue for discussing accountability.

This phase will take most of your time. This is the phase where all of the planning gives way to action and productivity for both the employees and the manager. In the monitoring phase a manager will need to do regular check-ins (including the quarterly feedback sessions), give feedback, and coach employees.

Quarterly Performance Feedback

The final phase is giving quarterly performance feedback. This is where managers will provide regular feedback with each employee on their performance expectations, performance goals (if applicable), and development goals. The manager is responsible for documenting these discussions quarterly using the Workday Check-in feature. The quarterly check-ins will replace the annual performance evaluation. The purpose of this phase is to determine how well the employee performed against the standards, recognize accomplishments they've made, and look toward the next quarter.

This model is flexible enough for you to tailor it to meet your needs or incorporate into other existing processes within your agency. Other than completing the quarterly check-ins where you will document the employees' performance expectations and goals in Workday, you have the flexibility to adjust the other components to better meet your needs.

Remember, you are no longer required to do the annual performance appraisal for your employees.

This module provided an overview of the enterprise manager values and competencies and the Performance Accountability and Feedback model and is one step in establishing accountability expectations for your employees.

MODULE 2 – THE PLANNING PHASE

In the first module you learned about the enterprise values and competencies and were provided an overview of the Performance Accountability and Feedback model. This module will go in depth on the different components of the planning phase. All the steps in the planning phase won't need to be completed every time. Typically, you will quickly revisit these items to make sure no changes have occurred since the last quarter and if so, you will make those updates. For new hires, you will go through all the steps in this phase.

In this module, we will cover the steps a manager needs to complete during the planning phase for each 12-month performance accountability and feedback cycle.

By the end of this module, you will:

- Understand the importance of tying your employees' work to the strategic direction of the agency.
- Be able to write effective duty statements and understand the importance of updating your employees' position description.
- Be able to write performance expectations and measures.
- Understand the importance of development planning and goal setting.

Strategic Direction

To be effective, the performance accountability and feedback process must be firmly linked to and rooted in the agency's core strategy and priorities. The strategic direction and priorities of the agency should be cascaded down from the top level of the agency to each division or work unit within the agency, and ultimately tied to each individual position. Employees should be able to see a direct link between what they must achieve and the agency's strategy direction and priorities. These should be reflected in each employee's performance expectations as well as in the competencies needed for success. This helps ensure everything done by each individual is helping to move the agency towards its strategic direction.

For this step you will want to make sure the core functions of the employee's position are linked to the agency's strategic direction and priorities and be able to articulate this linkage, so the employee understands how their position contributes to the agency.

Reviewing and Updating the Position Description

The next step in the planning phase is to review and update your employee's position description (PD). PDs are a fundamental component of planning for a manager. The PD communicates the expectations of the position and establishes performance standards for employees. At a minimum, you and your employee should review their PD once a year. You will want to focus your review on the description of duties to determine if they are clear and accurately describe the body of work they need to be performing.

If any of the duties are changing substantially or if this is a new position, partner with your HR department to make those changes or additions.

All PDs should be in Workday. Check with your HR department to determine the process for who adds and updates PDs in Workday.

Description of Duties

One of the key functions of a manager is to maximize productivity. Having clarity of roles and responsibilities allows employees to know what is expected of them and what standard they will be measured against.

The description of duties section is one of the most important parts of the PD because:

- It is critical to ensuring the employee is classified and compensated fairly for the work performed.
- An employee's successful job performance is based on the mutual understanding they have with you regarding the job duties.
- The description of duties are used to set the performance expectations for the core job functions of the position and are used to measure the employee's job performance.
- The majority of the duties are ongoing responsibilities and should not change much, if at all, from year to year.

Use the following guidelines for developing duty statements:

- Identify the main responsibilities or function of the position. Typically, a position will have 3-5 major responsibilities or functions. Similar duties should be grouped into one of the main responsibilities or functions.
- Title each key responsibility or function so they are quickly identifiable in the PD. For example, supervision, manage operations, budget.
- Describe the duties in terms of "what the position does" rather than "what gets done" using non-technical and straight forward language everyone can understand.
- Use classification titles and working titles, rather than names, when referring to other employees.
- When using abbreviations, give an initial explanation of what they mean.
- Describe the position as it actually is today, not as it will be at some time in the future. Do not include duties assigned solely for employee development or temporary duties.

The duty statements you develop will consist of three important elements.

- **Verb:** Start the duty statement with an action verb describing the function or duty being performed. Avoid ambiguous or nonspecific terms. To clarify verbs, use the word "by" and then complete the process or task.

Example: Provides leadership and direction to employees by aligning the operational goals of the division to the agency's strategic goals.

Example: Composes a variety of correspondence, reports and memos.

Example: Plans and conducts quarterly feedback sessions with employees.

- **Object:** The object identifies the verb's "target". It is the person(s) or thing(s) that receives the action of the verb.

Example: Collects financial data to evaluate budget requests.

Example: Monitors proposed legislative concepts to identify impacts to program.

Example: Coordinates the development and implementation of the work unit's operational plan.

- **Purpose:** The purpose describes the result or output that was achieved from the action.

Example: Compares invoices with purchase orders for consistency and accuracy.

Example: Provides budget oversight and planning to ensure the division is spending within the established parameters.

Example: Allocates resources among subordinate programs and functions to ensure each program and function is meeting their established goals and priorities.

Writing good duty statements takes practice.

Performance Expectations

The next step is to use the description of duties to develop performance expectations to measure if the employee meets those expectations.

The performance expectations help an employee understand why the position exists, where their position fits within the agency and division, and how the job's responsibilities link to the agency's strategic direction and priorities. This process helps the employee understand how their role directly impacts the agency.

Job duties define what the position does. Performance expectations define how the job duties are performed in a satisfactory manner. Performance expectations focus on the how, not the what.

Performance expectations include both ongoing program responsibilities and any new projects, assignments, priorities, or initiatives that are specific to each 12-month performance accountability and feedback cycle. The majority of expectations will articulate ongoing responsibilities and may not change much, if at all, from year to year. But you will always want to review and update them in the planning phase and throughout the year if they do change.

Performance expectations should be written for each key area of responsibility as outlined in the employee's PD. Focus on the key responsibilities or functions of the position having the greatest importance; it is not necessary to write expectations for every key responsibility or function. Best practice is somewhere between 4 or 5 expectations for each 12-month cycle.

Types of General Measures

There are general measures typically used for measuring a work unit or an employee's performance. As with the expectations, you will always want to review and update them in the planning phase and throughout the year if they do change.

- Quantity specifies how much work must be completed within a certain period of time.
- Quality describes how well the work must be accomplished. Specifies accuracy, precision, appearance, or effectiveness.
- Timeliness answers the questions: by when, how soon, or within what period.
- Effective use of resources is used when performance can be assessed in terms of utilization of resources such as money saved, waste reduced, streamlined processes.
- Effects of effort addresses the ultimate effect to be obtained; expands statements of effectiveness by using phrases such as: so that, in order to, or as shown by.
- Manner of performance describes conditions in which an individual's personal behavior has an effect on performance and collaboration skills.
- Method of performing work describes requirements; used when only the officially prescribed law, rule, policy, or procedure for accomplishing the work is acceptable.

To develop specific measures for the more tangible performance expectations, you first must determine the measures that are important for each element. Then, determine how to measure them for each expectation.

To develop the measures for each expectation, ask these questions.

- Is quality important? Does the stakeholder or customer care how well the work is done?
- Is quantity important? Does the stakeholder or customer care how many are produced?
- Is it important to accomplish the expectation by a certain time or date?
- Is it important to accomplish the expectation within certain cost limits?
- What measures are already available?
- How could (quality, quantity, timeliness, etc.) be measured?
- Is there some number or percent that could be tracked?

Behavioral Measures

Behavior based expectations do not lend themselves to being measured with numbers or a tangible work product. This makes it much more difficult to develop them. Typically, the way behavior-based expectations are measured is by identifying indicators of satisfactory behavior and then observing and providing feedback. Some questions you can ask when developing behavior-based measures include:

- Who are the people that will observe these behaviors regularly? Their manager, peers, employees, customers?
- What factors would they look for?
- What behaviors would the employee demonstrate?
- What are the indicators of satisfactory behavior?

Examples of Behavioral Measures

Example 1 – Building Trust

| Indicators of Ineffective Behavior | Indicators of Satisfactory Behavior | Indicators of Exceptional Behavior |
|---|---|--|
| On more than one occasion has disclosed information that is inaccurate, incomplete, or inappropriate (e.g., confidential, sensitive in nature). | Consistently shares information that is accurate and complete; handles sensitive information appropriately. | Is a role model for consistently sharing information that is accurate and complete; handles sensitive information with extreme care; encourages and inspires others to act the same. |

Example 2 – Communication

| Indicators of Ineffective Behavior | Indicators of Satisfactory Behavior | Indicators of Exceptional Behavior |
|--|---|---|
| Does not show interest in listening to ideas from others; has difficulty respecting ideas when different from own; tends to reach conclusions before listening to all sides. | Listens to and carefully considers ideas from others, even when different from own; ensures all sides are heard before reaching a conclusion. | Actively solicits and encourages ideas from a wide variety of individuals; is always careful to ensure every side is heard and considered before reaching a conclusion; lets others know they've been heard and are valued. |

Example 3 – Intentional Engagement

| Indicators of Ineffective Behavior | Indicators of Satisfactory Behavior | Indicators of Exceptional Behavior |
|---|--|---|
| Seldom promotes awareness and respect of cultural and individual values and differences; overlooks opportunities to leverage the strengths of others. | Promotes awareness and respect of cultural and individual values and differences; leverages the strengths of others to accomplish goals, regardless of background. | Consistently promotes awareness and respect of cultural and individual values and differences; proactively seeks out others from a variety of backgrounds to assist in accomplishing goals. |

Example 4 – Communication

| Indicators of Ineffective Behavior | Indicators of Satisfactory Behavior | Indicators of Exceptional Behavior |
|---|--|---|
| Does not provide regular, consistent, or meaningful information to others; requires frequent prompting and follow-up. | Provides regular, consistent, or meaningful information to others; ensures appropriate individuals are informed. | Proactively gives regular, consistent, and meaningful communication throughout organization; ensures important matters are shared with all appropriate individuals. |

Example 5 – Mentoring & Developing Others

| Indicators of Ineffective Behavior | Indicators of Satisfactory Behavior | Indicators of Exceptional Behavior |
|--|--|--|
| Does not hold others accountable for providing timely and quality results; provides inadequate or little guidance to others on how to maintain focus and overcome obstacles. Struggles to provide constructive performance feedback. | Holds employees accountable for producing quality, timely results; helps others maintain focus and overcome obstacles. Provides performance feedback that facilitates development. | Leads a high performing team that far exceeds expectations. Consistently provides and instructs others on how to give constructive performance feedback that facilitates professional development. |

Bear in mind the smallest number of standards that effectively indicate the expected performance should be used. Best practice is anywhere between 4 or 5 performance expectations a year should be used. You cannot and do not need to measure everything.

Once you have developed the performance expectations and measures, you will add them into Workday using the Check-in feature.

Development Planning and Goal Setting

Development planning and goal setting looks at performance that is beyond the regular and routine job duties, but they are still within the scope of an employee's classification.

During the planning phase, you will need to determine if the employee is meeting the performance expectations of their position by assessing where they are in their career. Are they new to the position and still learning the essentials of the position or have they been doing the work of the position for a while and are ready for a growth opportunity?

If the employee is meeting the performance expectations, you and the employee will identify development goals. Not all employees will be interested in pursuing other career opportunities and that is okay. You can still work with them to identify goals that will help them increase their skills for the current position.

If the employee is not meeting any of the performance expectations, you will work with them to set goals in order for them to meet those performance expectations.

You will want to have the employee involved with this step. Development planning and goal setting should be done once a year and then reviewed each quarter to see if changes need to be made and to document the employee's progress, challenges, or needs to be successful. A goal statement formalizes what is to be accomplished, who will be involved, when the activity will be completed, and how much cost and resources will be used.

SMART Goals

SMART is an easy-to-remember acronym for how to write complete and useful goal statements.

Specific

To make goals specific, they must identify exactly what is expected, why it is important, who is involved, where it is going to happen, and which attributes are important.

A specific goal will usually answer the four 'W' questions:

- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.
- Who: Who is involved?
- Where: Identify a location if applicable.

Measurable

The second criterion stresses the need for concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the goal. Measuring progress helps keep you on track so you reach your target dates and ultimately reach your goal. The indicators you develop should be quantifiable. A measurable goal will usually answer questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable

The third criterion stresses the importance of goals that are realistic and attainable. While an attainable goal may stretch you in order to achieve it, the goal is not extreme. An attainable goal will usually answer the question How? How can the goal be accomplished? How realistic is the goal based on other constraints?

Relevant

The fourth criterion stresses the importance of choosing goals that matter. A goal that supports or is in alignment with your current position or career path would be considered a relevant goal. A relevant goal can answer yes to these questions:

- Is this the right time?
- Does this match your other efforts/needs?
- Is it applicable to what you want to achieve overall?

Time-bound

The fifth criterion stresses the importance of grounding goals within a time frame and giving them a target date. A commitment to a deadline helps you focus your efforts on completion of the goal on or before the due date. A time-bound goal will usually answer the question of When?

If multiple goals are established, you and the employee should rank them in terms of importance or priority.

It is best practice to have a yearly planning meeting with your employees. Once you have completed all the steps in the planning phase you will need to document the information in Workday using the Check-in feature.

Quarterly, you and the employee should be reviewing the performance expectations and goals and updating them in Workday as needed.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind about the planning phase.

- It is wise to consider each employee as an individual; how they best function and what motivates them to perform. Then adjust your style as a leader to meet employees where they are at.
- Knowing more about individual employees helps you frame your performance expectations in a way that aligns with their personal and professional goals.

- Do not be concerned about stating the obvious. What seems obvious to one person may not be to another, so it is important to be certain you are very clear.
- Since it can take more than one interaction for someone to internalize your direction, you must document your expectations in writing and revisit them often with employees.
- Make sure to check back with employees to ensure clear understanding and resolve any miscommunications early on.
- Be an excellent role model for employees. Never expect anything of employees you would not expect of yourself.

Completing all the steps in the planning phase for the first time may seem daunting. You don't need to do it in one sitting, break it up into smaller tasks so you can complete it over a few weeks.

After completing this phase for the first time, all future planning phases will only consist of doing a quick review of everything to make updates as needed.

MODULE 3 – MONITORING & QUARTERLY FEEDBACK

This module covers the last two phases of the model, monitoring and quarterly feedback sessions. This is the phase where all of the planning gives way to providing regular feedback to maintain or improve your employees' behaviors and results. In this phase you will need to observe your employees' performance, conduct regular check-ins, give feedback, and coach your employees.

As a manager you should be engaging employees as much as possible in their performance by providing scheduled as well as in-the-moment feedback and recognition. Feedback ensures that positive behaviors are reinforced, and the right skills are acknowledged consistently. When employees understand your expectations, and are noticed, appreciated, and empowered, they are more likely to become and remain engaged, which results in a higher level of performance.

In this module we will cover the process for observing your employees' performance, providing feedback and coaching, and conducting the quarterly feedback sessions.

Work Styles

Before diving into this phase of the model, it may be helpful to complete the Work Styles Inventory if you have not done so or it has been a while. As a manager, being aware of your personal work style and effectively managing this style within your team and around your organization is a key component to your success. Understanding how to flex your style with other styles, especially within your team, will result in more productive relationships and engaged employees. Also, if you have never done this with your team it may be a good idea to have everyone complete and then share their styles. This is a great way to learn more about your employees and what their preferred style is.

Observing

Multiple studies have demonstrated that the human brain excels at finding patterns in the information it receives. Unfortunately, the brain is also very good at dismissing inconsistent details or even inventing details in order to make that information fit into a pattern. We also tend to categorize and evaluate behaviors when we see them rather than remembering the actual behavior.

What does that mean for managers? If an employee is considered to be a good performer, a manager may see, but not remember, a mistake in the employee's work. Conversely, with an employee considered to be a poor performer, a manager may be more likely to see and remember a similar mistake.

We also tend to remember negative behavior more than positive behavior. A manager may look at the results of an employee's behavior and make up what their actions were, rather than observing the actions firsthand.

As managers, we need to train our brain to be a better observer of performance. When observing your employees performance, consider these tips.

- Look and listen for specific actions and words that demonstrate something about an employee's performance. Observe as many details as possible.
- Get information from multiple sources if possible. Not only should you directly observe your employees performance you should also ask for feedback from their co-workers, employees, and customers, etc. Reviewing their work products is another way to get information from other sources.
- When you are observing your employee's performance avoid doing the following:
 - Comparing the employees past job performance when observing current performance.
 - Allowing the situation or setting to influence your observations.
 - Evaluating the performance while observing it.
- Since employees may perform differently at different times, it is important to make many observations of performance over a period of time. One of the best ways to track and remember your employees behaviors is to write it down shortly after observing their behaviors. You should include descriptions of the employees' actions and words, not evaluations of their performance. When you are observing your employees performance you may need to give them feedback immediately rather than waiting for the quarterly feedback session. If that is the case, still document your observations and then provide the feedback where and when it would be appropriate.

It is impressive to your employee when you have a record of their successes. Often managers only document evidence of problems, but it is a powerful motivator to notice and track good performance and results, and very useful at your performance feedback sessions. Using specific, objective, factual descriptions, record the following when observing your employees performance and keep it in each employee's working folder.

- Evidence of significant results of employee performance (successful or indicating need for improvement)
- Indicators of employee behaviors that you want to provide feedback about (positive or needing improvement)

Feedback Versus Coaching

Many times, feedback and coaching are used interchangeably, however there is a difference. Feedback is about reinforcing appropriate behavior and focuses on the past or current behavior. When we are talking about coaching, it is future oriented and intended to help employees grow and optimize their performance. To help make the distinction, here are some differences between feedback and coaching.

Feedback is:

- Can increase self-awareness
- Focused on past behavior
- Reactive to a situation
- Telling or advice oriented
- Used to help employees change behavior in a prescribed direction
- Controlled by giver
- Describes consequences

Coaching is:

- Focused on future behavior
- Proactive to obtain a development goal
- Inquiry oriented
- Used to help employees move ahead
- Focused on unlocking potential
- Controlled by the receiver
- Explores alternatives

Feedback

What happens for you physically when someone says they want to give you some feedback? Do you look forward to what they have to say or does your stomach seize and your pulse race?

Many people are conditioned to fear feedback and think whatever is said will highlight something wrong with them. When feedback is given effectively it can help people grow and learn from all of their experiences.

The best way to change your relationship with feedback is to take control and learn how to do it well. We all fear the unknown, so knowing you give feedback in a way that is helpful and caring, makes it easier for others to receive.

Creating and delivering a specific message based on observed performance is the key to effective feedback. You might have told someone they are a good leader, that they communicate well, or that they need to be more strategic. You may believe such statements are helpful examples of feedback.

But these statements only evaluate or interpret, they don't describe specific behavior so a person can learn and develop by repeating or avoiding that behavior.

Effective feedback should enable the receiver to walk away understanding exactly what they did and what impact it had. When the result is this specific and direct, there is a better chance the person receiving the feedback will be motivated to begin, continue, or stop behaviors affecting performance.

Situation – Behavior – Impact

Developed by The Center for Creative Leadership, the SBI feedback technique outlines a simple structure that you can use to give effective feedback. SBI stands for Situation-Behavior-Impact. When using the SBI technique you describe the situation, you describe the behavior you observed, and you explain the impact the behavior had. Using this technique, you can deliver feedback that replaces personal attack, incorrect judgments, vague statements and miscommunication with direct and objective comments that are focused on a person's actions.

“S” - Capture the Situation

The first step in giving effective feedback is to capture and clarify the specific situation in which the behavior occurred. If you say, "On Tuesday, in the break room with Carol and Fred," rather than "A couple days ago at the office with some people," you avoid the vague comments that derail so many feedback opportunities. Describing the location and time of a behavior creates context for your feedback and helps a person remember the situation and their behavior at the time.

Specificity is important when recalling a situation. The more specifics and details you can use in bringing the situation to mind, the clearer your message will be.

“B” Describing the Behavior

Describing the behavior is the second step and can be difficult because behavior can be hard to identify and describe. The most common mistake in giving feedback happens when judgments are communicated using adjectives describing a person but not a person's actions. When this happens, the feedback is ineffective because it doesn't give the receiver information about what behavior to stop or to continue in order to improve performance.

When describing a person's behavior, you should use verbs to focus on the actual behavior, not on a judgment as to what the behavior might mean. By focusing on the action, not the impression, you can communicate clear facts that the receiver can understand and act upon.

In order to be better at identifying behavior you have to capture not only what people do but how they do it. When giving feedback using SBI, it is not only important to capture what is said or done but how it is said and done. You can capture the “how” by paying attention to things such as body language, tone of voice, speaking manner, and word choice.

“I” - Deliver the Impact

The final step in giving effective feedback is to relay the impact the other person's behavior had on you. The impact you want to communicate is not how you think a person's behavior might affect the organization, co-workers, a program, clients, or any other third party. The impact you want to focus on and communicate is your reaction to a behavior. You should acknowledge the emotional effect the person's behavior had on you. The person hearing your feedback can't easily dismiss your personal experience and is more likely to hear what you've said.

By communicating the personal impact, a behavior had on you, you share a point of view and ask the other person to view that behavior from your perspective. That kind of sharing helps to build trust, which in turn can lead to even more effective feedback as communication is improved.

Coaching

In addition to feedback, another tool you want to use often is coaching. Coaching generally means a dynamic, collaborative relationship between you and the individual being coached. Coaching is about encouraging, confronting, challenging, questioning, as well as consistently respecting and supporting employees in developing and achieving their goals.

Coaching isn't "one size fits all" and when coaching someone you will benefit by being flexible and attentive. It is helpful to start by assessing the situation and asking these questions:

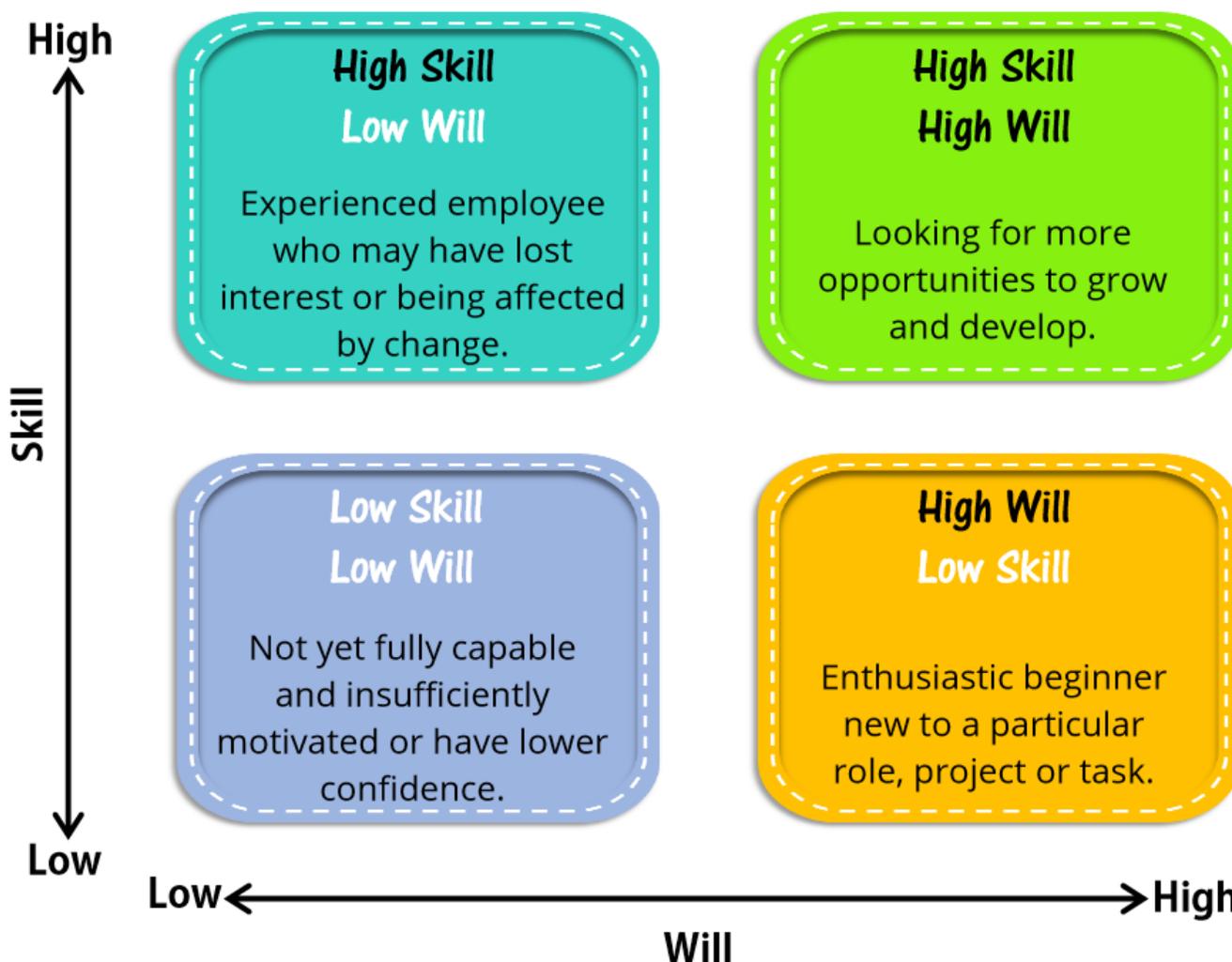
- What is the current state of the employee's performance?
- What is going well?
- What needs improvement?
- What is the impact of the deficiency (why is this a problem)?

After answering these questions, you need to determine if the employee has a skill or will issue. The skill/will matrix is derived from the model of situational leadership created by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard. Will stands for the involvement of the employee, and the extent to which they are risk tolerant. Skill refers to the employee's skills.

The skill/will matrix is an aid for identifying the appropriate coaching style to use with your employees. With the matrix, people are sorted into four groups.

- People with high skill and low will are the skilled, experienced employee who may have lost interest in the work they are doing or may be affected by a challenging change.
- People with high will and high skill are skilled employees who are looking for more opportunities to grow and develop.
- People with low will and low skill are usually an employee who is not yet fully capable and insufficiently motivated, or they may have lower confidence because they've already tried and failed.
- People with high will and low skill are usually the enthusiastic beginner new to a particular role, project or task.

If your employee falls into the high skill and will quadrant, you will use a non-directive coaching style. If they fall into the other three quadrants you will use a directive coaching style.



Directive Coaching

If your employee has lost interest in work, you may need to use some of these techniques to build the person's will.

Motivation

Finding out why an employee is demotivated can be challenging. They may be reluctant to admit the reasons, especially if reasons have to do with boredom or lack of ability. Or they may not trust you enough to open up to you.

When you approach your employee to determine why they are lacking motivation, it's important to be sensitive. Be mindful of the person's feelings and don't criticize or judge. It helps to avoid "you" language, which can sound critical and blaming and to focus on objective observations of the employee's behavior. If the employee is reluctant to speak about the situation or tries to downplay it, you can explain changes you have observed in their work or highlight the importance of the coaching relationship. You might point to how the coaching relationship has helped the employee in the past.

Use open-ended questions to elicit information. You don't want to waste time guessing what's going on with them. Let them tell you rather than asking closed questions, which may cause the employee to retreat further. Listen to what your employee tells you. Don't assume you already know what they are going to say. Acknowledge what employees say to you in an accepting way. It's also important to avoid jumping ahead. Don't suggest ways to build motivation until you find out what's wrong.

Positive Vision

Once you know why your employee feels a lack of motivation, it's time to move forward by creating a positive vision of what the employee can achieve in the future. This can help nudge your employee out of a negative frame of mind. To do this, you should find an area of interest and build enthusiasm for it: Explore your employee's areas of interest. This will give you insights into the goals and challenges that might serve as inspiration. Use prompting questions such as, "What would give you a sense of achievement?" or "What parts of your job do you enjoy?" Let your employee think about the question. Don't offer suggestions unless they seem stuck. Use hypothetical questions or statements to indicate areas the employee might like to get involved in.

Take advantage of what you learn about the employee's interests and build the employee's enthusiasm. If the employee starts expressing doubts, address those doubts by pointing to what they can offer. Encourage your employee to imagine how great it would be to achieve a new goal. By looking forward, you help the employee to move on.

Goals

As a result of creating a positive vision of the future, the employee's attitude might start to turn around. Now it's time to focus the employee on a specific goal. At this stage, you ask hypothetical questions as well as make goal suggestions. For example, you might say, "How would you feel about trying this task?" or "How would you feel about taking responsibility for this particular project?" The employee may also have ideas on how to move forward. At this point, you should talk about the employee's development plan and if it needs to be updated.

When you and your employee discuss interests and choose a new goal, the ideal situation is for the employee to identify goals closely related to their core job duties. However, this doesn't always happen and that may be fine. Improved performance in an area that isn't critical to core duties often has a very positive effect overall.

Sometimes when you're working with an employee to build will, you'll discover the reason for the lack of motivation is a gap in skills. In this case, you need to build the employee's skill.

When you're coaching to build skills, you serve as a guide. You should always invite the employee to express personal views and opinions about how to progress.

You can use four basic techniques to build an employee's skill.

- Begin your coaching with praise or positive feedback about what the person does well. Don't begin with negative comments; you can't inspire anyone with criticism.
- It's important to get the employee to agree on the need for skills coaching. Ask questions about what skills the employee would like to build or demonstrate. Be positive. Don't focus on what the employee doesn't have or must prove. Identify where support or training may be needed. Getting agreement is the first step for the employee to take responsibility to acquire the skills.
- Build on the employee's motivation and set achievable goals. In this way, the employee will feel a sense of achievement as each one is accomplished. Be clear and specific about what the employee needs to do. For example, give timeframes in which goals should be reached and get the employee's agreement to a plan of action.
- Link the employee's personal motivational needs to learning by connecting the acquisition of new skills to things the employee values.

Non-Directive Coaching

Directive coaching uses techniques to build an employee's will and skills. Non-directive coaching is the style of coaching you'll use when you address employees who have high skill and high will - in other words, your high performers. By successfully applying non-directive coaching techniques, you'll benefit by achieving deeper relationships with your employees.

The way you apply non-directive coaching depends upon the skills and motivation of each employee. Therefore, the techniques will vary. However, you can use these basic non-directive coaching techniques.

- Recognize the employee's approach and skills. It's important to show your employee the respect a high performing individual has earned. When you first meet with the person, recognize the employee's skills, achievements, or approach to the work. A bit of praise or positive feedback will help you start off on the right foot. Remember, non-directive coaching is not about telling your employee what to do. It's more about being encouraging and supportive.
- Work with the employee to identify new opportunities and challenges. Use hypothetical situations to encourage your employee to identify opportunities for career progression, qualifications, personal growth or more responsibility. This is a great time to look at what you can delegate to them that will provide new opportunities and challenges.
- Once your employee identifies new opportunities or areas to grow in, agree on the specific items and have the employee develop goals and document them in Workday as a part of their development plan. There are often several different ways to reach a goal and it's important for the employee to choose the path that suits them. Remember to get the employee to take on more stretching tasks, along with appropriate risks, so they are progressing and emphasize to the employee you'll be available whenever you're needed. But stand back and don't over manage them.

One-on-One Meetings

Another effective way to monitor performance is through having one-on-one meetings with your employees. Many managers think that these are too time consuming and express concern that doing them means they won't get anything else done. We must remember getting work done through others is the job of a manager, so this is the single best way you have to track progress and ensure things are going the way they should. There are lots of benefits to holding regular one-on-ones to check in with your employees, but you may be wondering how to do them successfully.

They should be scheduled at monthly intervals. Any longer between each one and you are both likely to forget things. It also keeps you both in alignment, them engaged and allows feedback and coaching to be more of an ongoing process (so it is less scary for both of you).

They should be scheduled on your and your employee's calendar. Employees know what is on your calendar is what you see as your priorities. Your employees are your priority and when they can see it,

it is good for everyone. Also, if you schedule them, you are much less likely to forget or have something else come up.

It is recommended that one-on-ones be somewhat structured and last for at least 30 minutes.

One “formula” for effective one-on-ones is 10/10/10. The first 10 minutes are for them, they can talk about whatever they want. The last 10 minutes are focused on the future, but consider coaching, maybe some discussion about career development and their goals, or even what they are reading for professional development. The 10 minutes in the middle are for you. You can assign work, talk about projects, updates and provide feedback - whatever you need to do. Think about this ahead of time. Employees become more comfortable when they know they may leave with assignments, but that you’re not coming up with them on the spur of the moment. Ask your employees to come prepared for their section as well. Don’t be concerned if one of the sections goes over a bit. Each meeting may vary, and you may not get to all components in each meeting. For instance, you may not have specific assignments to give them, or it may feel awkward to talk about career goals at every meeting. Just be intentional about how the time is used and consider all three components of the formula when planning your meetings.

Quarterly Feedback Sessions

The final phase in the Performance Accountability and Feedback model is the quarterly performance feedback sessions. The purpose of this phase is to determine how well the employee performed against the standards, recognize accomplishments they’ve made, and look toward the next quarter.

You will need to determine when the four required quarterly feedback sessions will occur for each 12-month cycle. You will also need to determine what feedback session you will do a recap of the previous 12-months and when you will do the planning for the next 12-month cycle. You can use one feedback session to do the recap and planning, or you can break them out. Do what works best for you based upon your needs.

Before conducting the performance feedback sessions, here are some best practices that can be adapted to your specific situation.

- Prepare yourself to conduct the meeting.
- Solicit information from their employees, peers, customers, and other managers.
- Gather helpful documentation such as notes from your observations of performance and any feedback or coaching sessions you had.
- Prepare the employee to participate in the meeting. Ask them to come with items they would like to discuss about their performance over the last quarter.
- Avoid surprises. If you are regularly checking in with your employee they should have a good idea of their performance.
- As with the other tools, quarterly feedback meetings should ensure expectations of the job are clear to the employee.

During the quarterly feedback sessions, you will meet with each of your employees to discuss:

- their performance over the past quarter,
- goals for the next quarter, and
- any changes that might be needed to their performance expectations or goals.

If you have been doing regular one-on-ones, observing their performance, providing feedback, and coaching, the quarterly performance feedback sessions should come together easily. When these tools are used effectively, an employee should never be surprised about what you say and document in a quarterly feedback session.

After you conduct the feedback session you will document any changes to the performance expectations and goals and document the outcomes of the meeting in Workday.

The Performance Accountability and Feedback model is a simple approach for you to implement to effectively manage your employees. By using this model, you will be able to build better relationships with your employees, provide them with the tools and resources they need to effectively perform in their positions, and deal with issues and misunderstandings early on.