

Directly Addressing Employee Issues

SRO Supervisor Forum

June 10, 2014

2:30 – 4:00 pm

Timeliness

If you see a problem, address it as soon as possible.



The Four Part Feedback Model

1. Describe current behaviors or performance

- Be objective and give specific examples
- Avoid judgment
- Avoid generalizations

Example:

You are terrible at time management – you always miss deadlines!

You have missed important deadlines. The year end summary which was due to Joe on May 15th and the specification report that was due to the programmer on May 17th were both submitted more than a week late.



The Four Part Feedback Model

2. Describe impacts and consequences
 - What does the employee think the impact is?
 - Check for understanding.

Because he did not have the summary, Joe was missing an important piece of information he needed for an audit, which may cause us to lose a contract. And our programmer proceeded with incorrect specifications because she did not receive your report on time.



The Four Part Feedback Model

3. Listen and Summarize

OK, I understand that you had to wait to get some information from the client because Beth was out of the office.



The Four Part Feedback Model

4. Identify Next Steps

- Actively engage employee in the solution.
- Be supportive

What do you think you would do differently next time?

Going forward, we expect that you will meet all deadlines. If we need to adjust a deadline, it's important that you communicate with all team members in advance to ensure that we meet project goals.



Role Plays

- Groups of 4 (2 managers/2 employees)
- Take a few minutes to read and discuss (managers and employees separately)
- Then choose one manager and one employee to have the feedback conversation.
- Some things to consider:
 - What worked well?
 - What would you do differently?
 - Did you find your assumptions going in affected how you handled the conversation?
 - What non-verbal communication cues did you observe?

Role Play #1 - Attendance

Joan - Supervisor

Brian is a research assistant whose time is allocated to one project. He has always demonstrated good performance, has a good track record of making significant contributions to the team, and has had no issues with dependability. Lately, Brian's supervisor, Joan, has noticed that Brian is exhibiting a pattern of poor attendance at work. Over the last two months, Brian has called in sick on five Mondays. Prior to that, although not quite as extreme, all the days that Brian missed due to illness were Mondays. Joan has even overheard Brian's co-workers comment on the fact that he doesn't seem to work on Mondays.

Brian - Employee

Brian is a research assistant whose time is allocated to one project. He loves his job and enjoys being able to make significant contributions to the team. Brian is married with two children who are both in college. Unfortunately, his wife, Mary, has recently become ill which has necessitated weekly medical treatments. These treatments occur every Friday, which makes for some rough weekends having to take care of Mary. By Monday, he is either completely exhausted and/or Mary is still not feeling well. He knows that he calls in sick way too often on Mondays and he is concerned about the perception of his co-workers, but he figures that it is his sick time to use.



Role Play Discussion Notes

Attendance - Role Play #1

What worked well:

- Approach was affected by supervisors working relationship with employee

- Helped to ask in an open-ended way about the employee's timesheet

- Asking "How's it going?" "Are Monday's different?"

- Emphasize good performance

- What's happening with time?

Consider what specifically you can ask.

Solutions can involve calendar adjustments

Perhaps designate a backup. Need to be careful with accommodations; may need HR consult.



Role Play #2 - Behavior

Edward - Supervisor

Susan is a programmer who has been in her position for a long time. She is really good at her job and is relied upon for her expertise in many areas. Recently, Susan was asked to work on a big project with tight deadlines. In order to free her up for this work, Edward decided to remove her as the lead on a current initiative aimed at upgrading one of the systems used by the organization, and one with which Susan is very familiar. Susan has remained on this upgrade team to provide input, but Edward has been noticing that Susan has begun exhibiting bad behavior in the team meetings. He has observed that Susan comes to the meetings completely unprepared, without pen or paper, and that she does not contribute to the conversation at all unless a question is posed directly to her. In one meeting Susan even sat in the corner of the room with her arms crossed during the entire meeting!

Susan- Employee

Susan is a programmer who has been in her position a long time. She has familiarity with several systems used by the organization and people are always coming to her for input and assistance. Earlier this year, Susan was leading a team working on upgrading one of the systems. She liked this task because she is very familiar with the system and enjoyed providing input on the proposed upgrades. However, last month Edward, Susan's supervisor, told her that she would not be leading this team any longer because she was needed on a big project with tight deadlines. Edward said he would still like her to remain on the upgrade team because her input is important. Susan was not happy. She feels that Edward should have asked her preference, or at least talked about how she could manage both commitments. Since then she has felt very demotivated and disengaged when working on the upgrade team, to the point that she dreads going to the meetings.



Role Play Discussion Notes

Behavior - Role Play #2

What worked well:

- Start with specific examples/observation

- Open with asking how the two assignments/roles are going

- Reiterate person's value in organization

- Apologize for not checking in on assignment change

What didn't work well:

- Just starting in directly with "problem" behaviors.

Our matrix organization makes this challenging, who exactly observed the behavior and who gives the feedback?



Role Play #3 – Performance

Monica - Supervisor

Kelly is a survey specialist who has been in her position for five years. She works on several projects, doing the same type of tasks on each, mainly writing tasks for the various printed materials and communications for the studies. Kelly works very hard and is always busy. She accepts new tasks with a smile and can be counted on to meet deadlines. However, Kelly's supervisor, Monica, is concerned about the frequency of mistakes that she and other team members find in Kelly's work. She is concerned that Kelly is not exhibiting adequate attention to detail.

Kelly - Employee

Kelly is a survey specialist who enjoys her job very much. She especially finds satisfaction in completing writing tasks for the three different projects on which she works. This work keeps her very busy and she feels that others must be happy with her work because they are constantly giving her more to do. However, lately Kelly has felt a bit overwhelmed. She has so much work that she has been struggling to make deadlines. This distresses Kelly because she hates to miss deadlines and does everything she can to complete her work on time.



Role Play Discussion Notes

Performance - Role Play #3

What's the underlying issue? Overloaded? Lack of skill?

Come with specific examples of performance problems.

Look at what's currently on their plate. Encourage them to speak up on overload.

Emphasize their value to organization, but make it clear what repercussions mistakes can have.

