



UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON | TACOMA

ESSENTIAL SUPERVISORY SKILLS

SUPERVISOR'S TOOLBOX

Fifth Edition 2016

Richard Wilkinson
Associate Vice Chancellor
Organizational Effectiveness & Development

rcwilki@uw.edu

tacoma.uw.edu

Essential Supervisory Skills

Supervisor's Toolbox

5th Edition



Essential Supervisory Skills: Supervisor's Toolbox

Author: Richard Wilkinson

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WELCOME!

*It takes unbelievable courage to be a good manager.
Arin Ain, CEO of Kronos*

People join organizations and leave bosses. Mr. Ain, quoted above, also said, “I believe very strongly that the single largest component of [an organization] that adds value is great management, and the single largest destroyer of value is bad management.”¹

The Supervisor’s Toolbox was created to support managers and supervisors as a ready reference of proven tools. These are drawn from over thirty years’ experience in human resources and organization development. Most are original, yet several are adapted from a range of sources encountered over the years.

The moment of truth occurs in our conversations with one another. How grounded a supervisor is in their values, the repertoire of tools they can draw upon, and their commitment to listen as well as talk are keys to making those moments with employees positive and productive.

This Fifth Edition has been substantially reorganized. In addition to reworking several tools, it includes seven new ones and two new chapters—Ch. 3 How to Listen and Ch. 11 Meeting Tips.

I hope these tools will give you confidence in handling the challenges you face day-to-day and contribute to your success and the success of those whose lives you touch.

*Richard Wilkinson
Associate Vice Chancellor
Organizational Effectiveness &
Development
University of Washington Tacoma*

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¹ New York Times, “Corner Office: The Incalculable Value of a Good Boss,” September 11, 2016

OVERVIEW

Use the Supervisor’s Toolbox as you would any toolbox—dive in and pick just what you need. The Toolbox is meant to be a just-in-time resource to help you handle whatever challenge or opportunity presents itself.

The Toolbox is organized into four sections and eleven chapters.

SECTION	CHAPTER	FOR NEW SUPERVISORS
1 Fundamentals of Supervision	1 The Heart of Supervision	1.1 The Heart of Supervision
	2 Your Management Style	2.1 The Guardian Lions of the New York Public Library
	3 How to Listen	3.3 Listening Assessment
2 Getting Started	4 Effective Hiring	4.3 Create a Selection Calendar
	5 Onboarding	4.11 Summary—Best Practices for Hiring
		5.2 Sample Onboarding Plan
3 Core Responsibilities	6 Fostering Accountability	6.1 Many Ways to Delegate
	7 Helping Staff Grow	6.2 Delegation Worksheet
	8 Performance Reviews	7.2 Menu of Professional Development Options
	9 Correcting Performance Problems	7.9 Tips for Giving Positive, Powerful Feedback
		8.3 Performance Review Steps
		9.3 The Four Steps to Address Performance Problems
4 Advanced Skills	10 Managing Change & Transition	9.7 Clarify Your Concerns and Approach
	11 Meeting Tips	10.2 The Three Phases of Transitions
		10.3 The Three Questions of Transitions
		11.6 Summary: What You Can Do to Increase the Effectiveness of Your Meetings

What Else You Can Do with the Toolbox

- Collaborate with an employee by sharing and using a tool together
- Share and discuss a tool with your team to foster team learning
- Form a book group to read and practice the tools
- Help a colleague by sharing a relevant tool with them

Supervisor's Toolbox

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PART 1

FUNDAMENTALS OF SUPERVISION

Chapter 1

The Heart of Supervision

- 1.1 The Five Key Words of Supervision
- 1.2 The Heart of Supervision
- 1.3 Five Traits of a Great Boss

Nearly anyone can stand adversity, but if you want to test a person's character, give them power.

Abraham Lincoln

1.1 The Five Key Words of Supervision

These *five* words serve as touchstones to guide and bolster supervisors in their day-to-day work of supporting employee success.

Clarity	Empathy	Courage	Attention	Persistence
Clear, understandable, simple	Understanding, appreciation, compassion, insight	<p>“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”</p> <p>-Winston Churchill</p>	<p>Concentrated direction of the mind;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness • consciousness • watchfulness • mindfulness 	To continue steadfastly or firmly in purpose or course of action
<i>So that supervisors...</i>				
Encourage, direct, delegate, and give feedback in a way that is clearly understood by others	Act with a full understanding of what others are experiencing	Step up to the practical and emotional challenges they must face	Demonstrate the value of employee efforts and contributions	Stay focused on what they are striving to achieve and not giving up in the face of distractions and setbacks

1.2 The Heart of Supervision

This chart describes behaviors that achieve the core responsibilities of supervisors in ways that are motivational to knowledge workers.

- That *Listening, Setting Goals, and Cultivating Accountability* are core responsibilities of supervisors stems from the premise that supervisors are ultimately responsible for seeing that their unit delivers the level of service required by their organization.
- *Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose* are the essential factors that motivate knowledge workers to contribute their talents most fully to an enterprise. The degree to which these factors are present or absent in an individual’s job is largely determined by their supervisor. §

The quality of the work environment, the productivity of employees, and the level of employee engagement is largely determined by the degree of authenticity and skill with which these behaviors are practiced day-to-day.

	Autonomy	Mastery	Purpose
Listen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know your employees 2. Pay positive attention 3. Put yourself in their shoes 4. Ask for feedback 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage career aspirations 2. Identify relevant learning opportunities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep current 2. Scan the horizon 3. Serve as a sounding board when difficult situations arise
Set Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delegate intentionally 2. Build trust—listen, inform, follow-through, advocate when appropriate 3. Help prioritize 4. Foster teamwork 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give challenging assignments and the chance to learn something new 2. Support learning 3. Provide technical support, guidance, and feedback 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect the work to the mission 2. Walk the talk 3. Cultivate self-awareness 4. Clarify your values and seek to understand the values of your staff 5. Admit your mistakes
Cultivate Accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify responsibilities, authority, expectations 2. Encourage problem-solving. Ask: “What would you do?” 3. Paint a picture of success 4. Establish regular communication routines 5. Reward good work 6. Be candid about work that is sub-par 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be alert to coachable moments 2. Encourage learning from the work 3. Give timely, specific feedback 4. Connect to mentors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask: What best serves the organization’s mission, vision, and values? 2. Identify and discuss the ethical dimensions of our work.

§See annotated bibliography

1.3 The Five Traits of a Great Boss*

In a Fierce, Inc. survey of more than 1,700 corporate executives, employees, and educators, some 70 percent said they have a “positive” working relationship with their boss.

Here are five key traits that make a great boss:

1. **Value what employees say.** Eighty percent of respondents who identified a positive relationship with their boss said that one of the top factors in the relationship’s success is that their employer values their input. When your employee comes to you with an idea, it’s important to sit down, actively listen, and explore the idea even when it seems unrealistic at first. If you miss the opportunity to process their input you will not only short-change yourself, you will diminish the relationship.
2. **Solicit diverse opinions.** Forty percent of people who claimed a poor working relationship said that the relationship was failing in part because their manager never solicited their input in the decision-making process. Not all employees will volunteer their opinions, especially early in the relationship. Actively solicit diverse opinions and feedback, and draw out all perspectives. This will help ensure that employees feel heard and valued, keeping them engaged and encouraging them to grow.
3. **Offer constructive feedback.** Almost 40 percent of survey participants who reported a good relationship felt that it was important for managers to offer constructive feedback. While listening is important, supervisors must also play an active part in staff development by offering perspectives on their ideas. This takes extra time and effort, but it is well worth it to ensure that employees are prepared to take on new responsibilities and roles.
4. **Be honest.** More than 33 percent of respondents also cite honesty as a key component of a successful relationship. Employees crave transparency and candor. Trust that your employees are capable of handling the truth, whether it’s in reference to their performance or the company’s overall trajectory. When reality is presented in a non-threatening manner, people can rise to the occasion while gaining the opportunity to play a more meaningful role in their individual and collective success.
5. **Keep everyone informed.** More than 40 percent of those surveyed who claimed a bad working relationship with their manager felt their boss failed to keep them in the loop. Once a decision is reached, leaders often fail to communicate the decision effectively to those who are affected by it. Keep your employees informed so they clearly see the impact they have on the organization and your decision-making process. Few things can be more frustrating than being left in the dark. People crave high levels of candor, collaboration, and curiosity from their managers. While it may require leaders to slow down, building relationships that foster engaged employees and improved decision-making on both sides is more than worth it.

**By Halley Bock, “Ragan’s HR Communications”, 14 October 2011. Used with permission. Halley Bock is the former CEO of Fierce, Inc., a Seattle-based leadership and development training company that drives results for businesses by improving workplace communication.*

Chapter 2

Your Management Style

- 2.1 The Guardian Lions of the New York Public Library
- 2.2 Guardian Lions Worksheet
- 2.3 Statement of Your Management Expectations

**The journey to becoming a wise and effective leader
begins with the work of understanding oneself.**

*Kyle Dodson
School Principal*

2.1 The Guardian Lions of the New York Public Library

Metaphors have power. During the 1930s, New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia named the guardian lions in front of the New York Public Library for the qualities he felt New Yorkers would need to survive the economic depression: Fortitude and Patience. These names have endured ever since, capturing two important touchstones needed for navigating life's challenges.

What are the touchstones for your management practice? What two ideas are most important to you, that you want to be known for in your interactions with others? Keeping these two ideas in mind will help simplify and clarify your mind and reliably guide your actions in ways that meet your personal aspirations for excellence.



FORTITUDE



PATIENCE

*The Guardian
Lions of the
New York
Public Library*



CLARITY



CARING

*The author's
"Guardian
Lions" that
inform his
management
practice*



*What two
"Guardian
Lions" will
distinguish
your daily
management?*

2.2 Guardian Lions Worksheet

Use this worksheet to consider how your Guardian Lions are demonstrated in action. How do you translate your central values into daily practices? One way the author’s Guardian Lion of **Clarity** manifests itself is through engaged listening and paraphrasing. In this way, I can be sure I understand the speaker’s intent or correct any misunderstanding I may have.

At the same time, a skill can be overused in a way that obstructs your success instead of contributing to it. For example, listening well and paraphrasing can be a problem when the speaker mistakes one’s understanding for agreement. Being aware of these risks can help you minimize the impact of overusing a particular skill.

	Your Guardian Lions	3 ways these show up in practice	Evidence of overuse
Example	Clarity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active listening and paraphrasing 2. Careful attention to email structure 3. Weekly prioritization 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confusing my understanding for my agreement 2. Over-editing simple messages 3. Not allowing for the unexpected
Lion #1		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 	
Lion #2		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 	

2.3 Statement of Your Management Expectations

Don't make your staff guess at what you are looking for in their work. By being clear about what you want will ensure you are more likely to see the results you desire.

Here are three examples of how different managers have done so. This is a great exercise to clarify what matters to you most and a gift to those who work with and for you.

Three Sample Statements of Management Expectations

Each of us represents all of us—we are always ambassadors for our team and our organization.

Good design contributes to clarity and reflects mastery.

Keep asking, "How can we do this better?"

Every interaction is a moment of truth in the application of our values.

Everyone deserves respectful and courteous treatment, regardless of their circumstance or behavior.

Own the difference you can make.

Care about the work and one another.

Show up on time, be nice, work hard.

Ask questions if you don't know.

Share your ideas.

Take responsibility for your own professional development.

Be patient with those who are impatient.

Work hard on things that matter.

Treat each other well.

Write what you expect of your team here. Share when done. Revise as needed.

Chapter 3

How to Listen

- 3.1 How to Listen
- 3.2 Follow the Blinking Word
- 3.3 Listening Assessment

The difference between listening and pretending to listen is enormous. Real listening is a willingness to let the other person change you. When I'm willing to let them change me, something happens between us that's more interesting than a pair of dueling monologues.

Alan Alda
American Actor

3.1 How to Listen

Listening well takes effort and concentration. Consider these tips from consultant Rick Ross to becoming a better listener. §

1. **Stop talking:** to others and to yourself. Learn to still the voice within. You can't listen if you are talking.
2. **Imagine the other person's viewpoint.** Picture yourself in her position, doing her work, facing her problems, using her language, and having her values. If the other person is younger or more junior, remember your early days at the organization.
3. **Look, act and be interested.** Don't read your mail, doodle, and shuffle or tap papers while others are talking.
4. **Observe nonverbal behavior,** like body language, to glean meanings beyond what is said to you.
5. **Don't interrupt.** Sit past your tolerance level.
6. **Listen between the lines,** for implicit meanings as well as explicit ones. Consider connotations [secondary meanings] as well as denotations [explicit meanings]. Note figures of speech. Instead of accepting a person's remarks as the whole story, look for omissions—things left unsaid or unexplained—which should logically be present. Ask about these.
7. **Speak only affirmatively while listening.** Resist the temptation to jump in with an evaluative, critical or disparaging comment at the moment a remark is uttered. Confine yourself to constructive replies until the context has shifted and criticism can be offered without blame.
8. **To ensure understanding,** rephrase what the other person has just told you at key points in the conversation. Yes, I know this is the old "active listening" technique, but it works—and how often do you do it?
9. **Stop talking.** This is first and last, because all other techniques of listening depend on it. Take a vow of silence once in a while.

§See annotated bibliography

3.2 Follow the Blinking Word

What better way to learn, convey respect, and demonstrate unequivocally that another person matters than by listening to them. This technique comes from Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans.

They write, “You can get more of what you want from your work if you improve your listening and your understanding of how work really gets done, the challenges your organization faces, changes coming, and the challenges your boss faces...When you tune out, you miss out.”

Following the blinking word will force you to pay close attention to what another person is saying. §

Technique

1. Identify one word of what the speaker has said that *blinks* (stands out).
2. Ask about any one of the blinking words.
3. Listen for the answer.
4. Notice the blinking words in his or her answer and question one of them.
5. Pay attention to the answer.
6. Identify one blinking word in his or her answer and question it.

Example: You’re having lunch with Brad, a coworker. As he talks, you *decide* to get curious and *really listen*. Brad says, “This project is a nightmare. I can’t wait for it to end.”

1. Speaker: “This project is a nightmare. I can’t wait for it to end.”
You could inquire about project, nightmare, or end.
2. You: “Tell me more about the work. What makes it a nightmare?”
3. Speaker: “It’s a nightmare because of the customer.”
4. You: “What about the customer makes this so hard for you?”
5. Speaker: “He complains about everything. Then he sets another impossible deadline.”

You: “Does he have total control over your deadlines?” or “Tell me about his biggest complaints.”

§See annotated bibliography

3.3 Listening Assessment

Rate yourself using this assessment to find out how well you listen. Some of the items describe behaviors that demonstrate effective listening and some that obstruct effective listening. Feeling bold? Ask others to rate you using the same scale.

1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Always

	Rating
1. I give the impression that I am fully listening.	
2. I make the speaker feel as if he or she is the center of the conversation.	
3. I give the speaker plenty of time to talk.	
4. I refrain from interrupting the speaker.	
5. I look at the speaker with encouraging eye contact.	
6. I fidget with objects or otherwise act distracted.	
7. I help keep the speaker on track with paraphrasing.	
8. I probe for deeper understanding.	
9. I finish the speaker's sentences.	
10. I convey an attitude of openness and sincerity.	
11. I put the speaker at ease, encouraging deeper sharing.	
12. I ask questions that open up the discussion.	
13. I ask questions to direct more discussion to a particular point, when helpful.	
14. I ask questions to draw out emotions as much as fact.	
15. I insert humorous remarks even when the speaker is serious.	
16. I sneak a peek at my watch or cell phone.	
17. I smile at the speaker and lean forward to convey interest.	
18. I'm willing to be influenced by what I hear.	
19. I create an atmosphere of trust and connection through listening.	
20. I demonstrate empathy through listening.	

PART 2

GETTING STARTED

CHAPTER 4 EFFECTIVE HIRING

- 4.1 Hiring Process Overview
- 4.2 STEP 1: Position Review and Planning
- 4.3 STEP 2: Create a Selection Calendar
- 4.4 STEP 3: Recruiting and Advertising
- 4.5 STEP 4: Candidate Ranking
- 4.6 STEP 5: Interview Question Development
- 4.7 STEP 6: The Interview Process
- 4.8 STEP 7: Reference Checking
- 4.9 Sample Telephone Reference Check
- 4.10 STEP 8: Select and Offer
- 4.11 Summary—Best Practices for Hiring

**Nothing we do is more important than hiring and
developing people.**

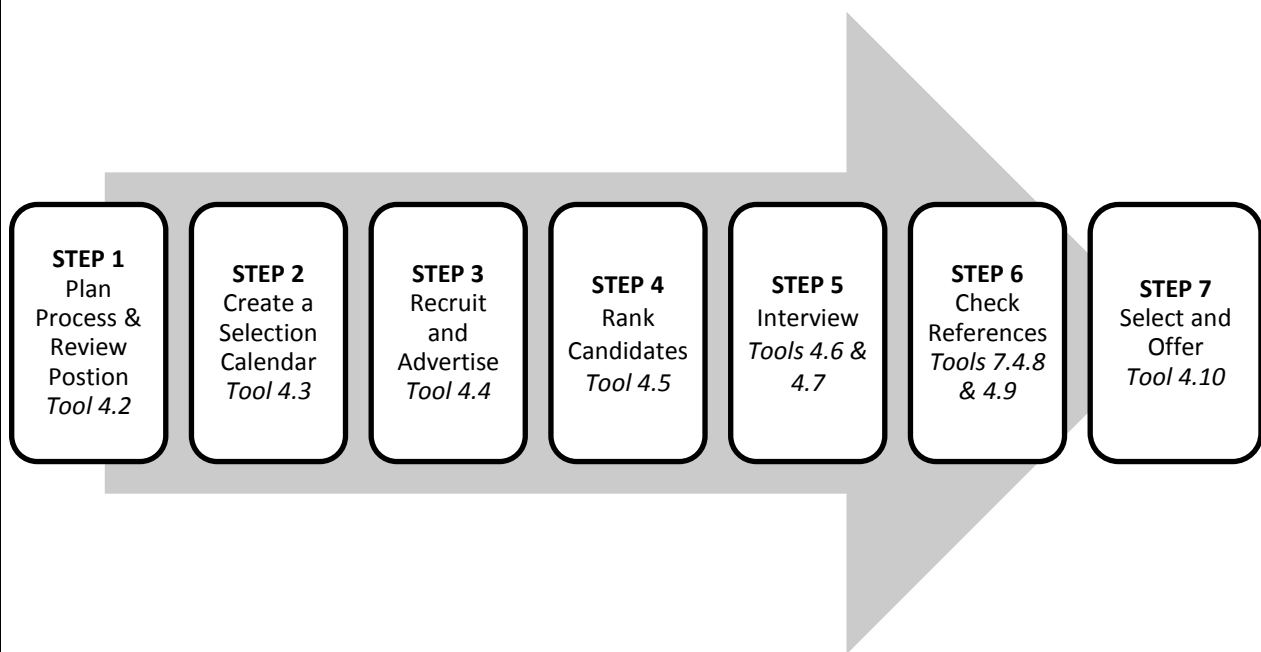
*Lawrence Bossidy
Author & former COO of GE*

4.1 Hiring Process Overview

The key to hiring good employees is effective planning during the recruitment process. The aim should be for a process that is

- *Welcoming*
- *Clear*
- *Fair*
- *Efficient*
- *Timely*
- *Thoughtful*

The most effective way to expedite the hiring process is for the hiring manager to make it a priority.



4.2 Step 1: Position Review & Planning

The first step to successful recruiting is to thoroughly review of the position. Second, start planning now for the recruitment→interview→selection process. Last minute logistical issues can cause frustrating delays and you may lose potential candidates.

The process you develop not only helps you find a talented staff member; it is a reflection of the organization. Consider the hiring process the beginning of a candidate's relationship with the organization.

① Analyze the position

Update Job Description

- What is really needed?
- What possibilities does the position offer the organization and employee?

Identify Key Competencies

- What technical and business skills and abilities are needed to do the job successfully?

Describe Critical Behaviors

- What interpersonal qualities are needed given the complexity of interactions expected of someone in this position?

Specify Experience and Education Levels

- What minimum experience and education levels make sense?
- Caution! The higher the qualifications the fewer the applicants.

② Plan ahead for the following

WHO will be involved?

- Ranking
- Interviewing
- Reference Checking
- Selecting

WHEN will the process take place?

- Create a recruitment timeline or calendar
- Reserve time on calendars and rooms for interviewing

WHERE will you post the position?

- Newspapers and other customary sites
- LinkedIn groups
- Affiliation and association websites
- Partners
- The organization's public websites

4.3 Step 2: Create a Selection Calendar

Goal: Hire a program coordinator to start by June 29 to refill the recently vacant position.

April				
6 <i>Update job description</i>	7 <i>Create selection calendar</i>	5. <i>Submit requisition</i>	9	10
13	14 <i>Prepare position announcement</i>	15	16 <i>Schedule interview panelists</i>	17
20 <i>Post position</i>	21 <i>Recruit, recruit, recruit!</i>	22	23	24
27	28	29	30 <i>Prepare interview questions</i>	
May				
4	5 <i>Start screening applications</i>	6	7	8
11	12 <i>Complete screening of applications</i>	13	14 <i>Invite top applicants to interview</i>	15
18	19	20 <i>First interviews</i>	21 <i>First interviews</i>	22
25	26 <i>Invite top candidates for second interview</i>	27	28 <i>Complete second interview</i>	29
June				
1	2 <i>Inform top candidate of preliminary decision; ask for references</i>	3	4 <i>Start reference checking</i>	5
8	9 <i>Complete reference checking; Obtain approval for salary offer</i>	10 <i>Offer candidate position</i>	11 <i>Hear back from candidate [They give 2 weeks' notice]</i>	12
15 <i>Notify finalists of selection decision</i>	16	17 <i>Prepare onboarding plan</i>	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29 <i>New Employee Starts!</i>	30			

4.4 Step 3: Recruiting and Advertising

A clear and fair hiring process starts with an open and competitive recruitment. Finding the right candidate is more about the quality of applicants than the quantity. This means it is less about casting a broad net, and more about targeting a specific talent pool.

Experiment

- *Experiment* with different tools and websites such as LinkedIn, local papers and field-specific organizations.
- Consult with your HR recruiter and other managers for advice on where to advertise and promote the opening.

Reach Out

- Encourage colleagues to *reach out* to their networks.
- Use listservs and networks of other hiring managers.
- Contact leadership in professional and community organizations.
- Give recruiting materials to colleagues attending workshops and conferences.

Communicate

- *Communicate* key functions of the position, minimum qualifications, application deadline and other pertinent information.
- Maintain a consistent look and feel to all advertisements, using the organization's logo when appropriate.

Track

- *Track* where top candidates learned about the position and save data for future openings.
- Keep *track* of money spent on each recruiting activity.

4.5 Step 4: Candidate Ranking

A ranking sheet is a useful tool to score resumes, keep track of candidate information and to document the decision. Base the ranking sheet criteria on the requirements for the position. Weighting important criteria can help differentiate top candidates.

Sample ranking sheet

Applicant	Education (Masters = 1 pt, Ph.D. = 2 pts)	Relevant Competencies (1 pt)	Relevant Work Experience (1 pt)	Score	Meets Min. Quals?	Interview?
Joe Husky	1	0	1	2	No	No
Jane Doe	2	1	1	4	Yes	Yes

Other areas to consider

*Writing, Spelling and
Grammar*

Bonus Skills

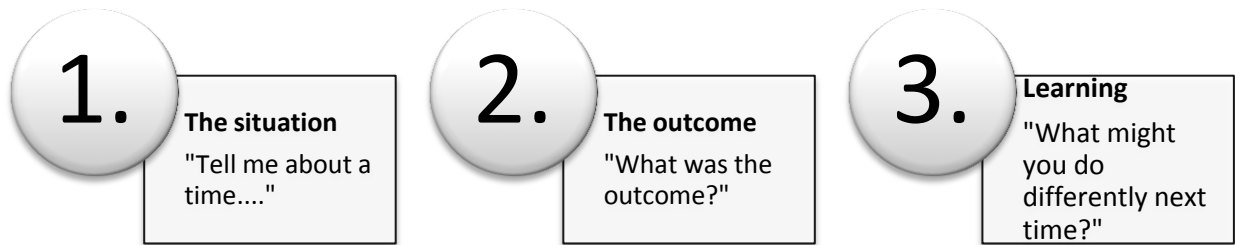
*Previous History with
Our Organization*

Relocation

4.6 Step 5: Interview Question Development

Use behavior-based interview questions to get the best indication of how a candidate will perform in the position. The premise of behavior-based questions is that past performance is the best indicator of future performance. Behavior based questions ask the candidate how they have handled situations in the past similar to things they would encounter in this position. Hypothetical and yes/no questions yield little insight on how a candidate will perform in the position.

Behavior based interview questions will ask the candidate to describe



Here is an example of critical abilities for a Recruiter and possible interview questions to address them.

Behaviors Critical to Success	Possible Question
1. Patience; keeping cool under pressure	Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
2. Flexibility; open to exploring	Tell me about a time when you had to change work midstream because of changing organizational priorities.
3. Skilled recruiter	Tell me about a difficult recruitment, and how you went about finding the best candidate in the time frame the hiring manager needed.
4. Highly motivated and energetic; enjoys the work and learning	Tell me about a goal that you set that took a long time to achieve or that you are still working toward.
5. Superior communication skills, both interpersonally and in writing	Tell me about a time when you had to present a proposal to a person in authority and were able to do this successfully.
6. Superior analytical, people, and problem solving skills	Tell me about a time when you had to analyze facts quickly, define key issues, and respond immediately or develop a plan that produced good results.
7. Excellent organizational skills	Describe your responsibilities for planning and organizing in your current position.
8. Technical expertise	Describe your experience and background in _____. What have been your biggest challenges and what have you learned to help you in your most recent role?

4.7 Step 6: The Interview Process

The interview process is the introduction to the future employee's relationship with the organization. The following list is adapted from the most popular training video ever produced, "More Than a Gut Feeling III" by Dr. Paul Green (2000).

Introduce

- Ask rapport-building questions to put the candidate at ease
- Describe the process and timeline for the recruitment
- Discuss the job at the beginning of the interview
- Provide a description of the team and work environment
- Ask the candidate what questions they have about the position

Support

- Take notes and explain why you are taking them
- Maintain control
- Be patient
- Allow silence
- Clarify the intent of questions, if needed

Interview

- Ask behavior-based questions about job-related experience
- Ask the candidate questions about their resume
- Press for specifics
- Thank them, without offering feedback on performance

Assess

- Ask yourself: "Have I conducted this interview in a way that will contribute to the needs of UW Tacoma and the dignity of the candidate"
- Thinking about the candidate, ask yourself about their:
 - Experience and qualifications
 - Characteristics and abilities
 - Interpersonal skills

4.8 Step 7: Reference Checking

References should be from professionals, and should not be from family members. Similar to interviewing, reference check questions should ask the reference how the candidate behaved. Questions should be driven by the position competencies.

Tips for good reference checks

Check three professional references

Write out behavior-based reference questions beforehand

Use the position's competencies as your guide

Example

Competency: Works well under pressure.

Behavioral Question: "Please provide an example of how Joe Husky demonstrated the ability to work in a fast paced, ever changing environment."

4.9 Sample Telephone Reference Check

This sample is based on the format recommended by the University of Washington.

Question: "I wish to verify some of the information given to us by [Applicant], who is being considered for employment at [Organization] as a/an [Position Title]."

GENERAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS

1. What is his/her job title and primary responsibilities? Dates of employment?
2. How would you describe the quality of his/her work?
3. How well did he/she respond to pressure (e.g., from high volume, deadlines, multiple tasks, public contact)?
4. How well did he/she plan and organize his/her work, and were assignments typically completed on time?
5. What was the amount of supervision required for him/her?
6. How well did he/she get along with other people (e.g., clients, co-workers, supervisors)?
7. How did he/she respond to criticism/interpersonal conflict?
8. What are his/her strongest skills as an employee?
9. What areas of his/her performance would benefit from further development?

QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE NEW POSITION

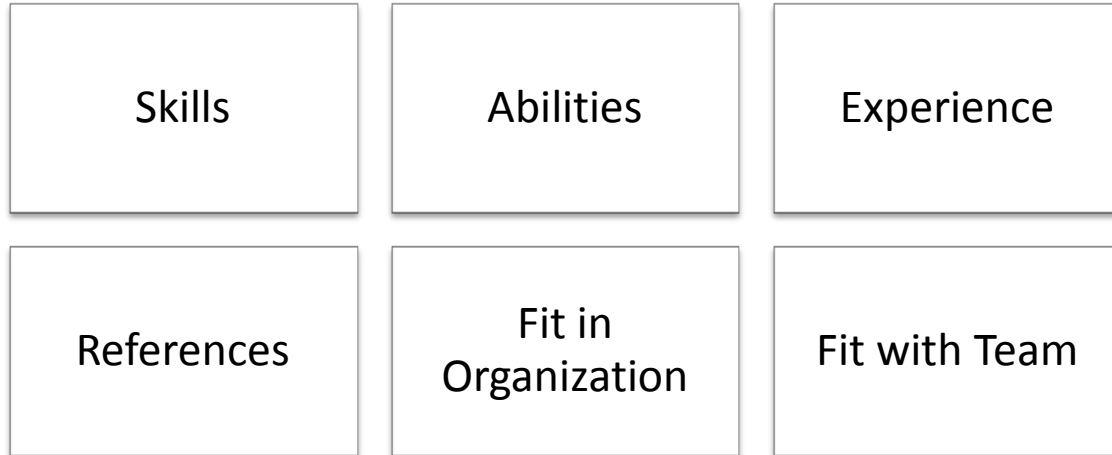
Questions addressing specific duties of this particular position should be included. For example, such questions might cover one or more of the following areas:

- ❖ Technical knowledge or skills applicable to this type of work
- ❖ Experience in the applicable professional field
- ❖ Clerical skills/experience
- ❖ Lead/supervisory experience
- ❖ Budget/bookkeeping
- ❖ Fiscal management
- ❖ Computer applications (software, hardware, operating systems, etc.)
- ❖ Program development and project management
- ❖ Writing
- ❖ Interpreting and applying rules and regulations
- ❖ Presentations and public speaking

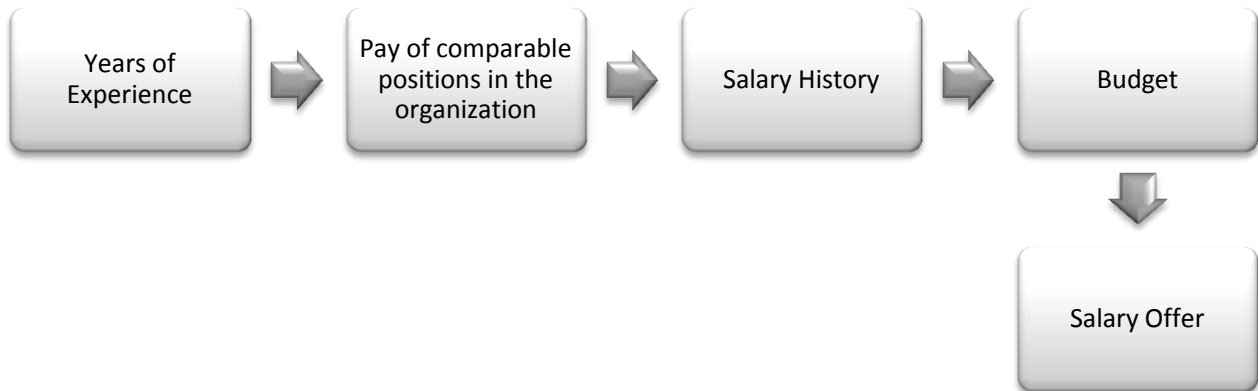
4.10 Step 8: Select and Offer

Here are some helpful tools to guide you through the selection and salary offer process.

Use these six factors in evaluating the final candidate



Factors to consider in determining salary



Salary Negotiating Tip

If a candidate asks for more money, highlight the benefits, working environment and professional development opportunities the position offers. Check with Human Resources and be sure not to over-promise.

4.11 Summary: Best Practices for Hiring

Planning	Recruitment & Advertising	Ranking	Interviewing	Select & Offer
Start early	Use the organization's website	Use the job description as the basis for your ranking	Remember! Job analysis precedes question development	Consider technical and non-technical competencies
Analyze the job thoroughly	Leverage your networks	Weight criteria based on relevance to success	Use behavior-based questions	Consider candidate's characteristics
Update job description	Assess candidates using measurable requirements	Avoid assumptions or guessing at motivations	Be warm and welcoming, introduce interview team, outline the process	Consider candidate's experience
Design annual hiring plan (but be flexible)	Market the position, organization, environment, etc.	Create a ranking sheet to keep track of candidates	Let the candidate ask questions	Conduct reference checks. Pay attention to hesitations, ask follow-up questions
Create a hiring calendar	Announce the opportunity to staff and appropriate partners	Select top 2 – 4 for one opening	Discuss the candidates with the interview team immediately	Consider fit in the organization
Decide who to involve and their role	Provide informational interviews	Use cover letter as a writing sample	Schedule up to three interviewers per round	Set a realistic start date
Hire for multiple positions at the same time	Use LinkedIn; reach out to colleagues	Look for gaps, inconsistencies, changing jobs	Reel candidates in; describe why they should want to work here	Document decision; Debrief
Start to prepare for new employee	Send information about the organization and team	Notify candidates not selected for interview	Follow up with all those interviewed personally	Be consistent and fair

CHAPTER 5 *ONBOARDING*

- 5.1 Onboarding Overview
- 5.2 Sample Onboarding Plan
- 5.3 The Five Conversations

The actions one takes during their first three months in a new job will largely determine whether they succeed or fail.

Michael Watkins
"The First 90 Days"

5.1 Onboarding Overview

Setting a new employee up for success is the main goal of a good onboarding process. An employee should know what is expected of them in their first 60 days. These expectations should be realistic and encourage growth in technical aspects of the position as well as relationship building.

Create the Plan

Be there on their first day

Set up their office

Make lunch arrangements

Clarify for the Employee

The competencies and skills required

Who they will be working with

Expectations
Technical Relationships

Discuss with the Employee

Goals for the first sixty days

Initial assignments

What success looks like

5.2 Sample Onboard Plan

Add appointments, meetings, training, networking, assignments, and events to this orientation plan. It works great to plan with your team the new employee's first few weeks.

First Day	First Week	First Month	First 60 Days
<p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p><i>Start time, lunch plans, workplace tour, initial meetings. What can you do to make the first day memorable for the employee?</i></p> <p>8:30 Greet employee in lobby</p> <p>8:45 Get settled in office</p> <p>9:15 Meet with manager; review orientation plan</p> <p>9:45 Team meeting</p> <p> Noon Team outing/lunch</p> <p>2:00 Workplace tour</p>	<p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p><i>Meetings, training, document review, and networking priorities for each day.</i></p> <p>TUESDAY: <i>Attend division staff meeting</i></p> <p>WEDNESDAY: <i>Meet with colleagues in other units</i></p>	<p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p><i>Check-in meetings, other meetings, training, and networking priorities for the rest of the month.</i></p>	<p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p><i>Required training, workshops, professional or community events, ongoing networking.</i></p>
Manager's General Expectations	Initial Assignments	Success Criteria for the First 60 Days	
<p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p>Here is where you would insert your statement of management expectations created with Tool 2.3 [pg. 22].</p> <p>It's important for employees to understand their new boss' values and mindset related to customer service, continuous improvement, learning, and representation of the organization.</p>	<p>EXAMPLE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete orientation 2. Establish positive working relationships 3. Make progress on.... 4. Master.... 5. Develop... 6. Research... 7. Review... 	<p>EXAMPLE:</p> <p>"I will know you are succeeding to the degree you accomplish the initial assignments, establish effective working relationships with the team and within the organization, and own the key accountabilities of your position:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability #1 • Accountability #2... 	

5.3 The Five Conversations

These five recommended conversations with a new employee are adapted from Michael Watkins in his book *The First 90 Days*. §

<p>The situational diagnosis conversation</p>	<p>In this conversation seek to explain how you see the business situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the organization reach this point? • What factors—both soft and hard—make this situation an exciting and challenging one?
<p>The expectations conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does your new employee need you to do in the short term and in the medium term? • What will constitute success? • How will your performance be measured? When?
<p>The style conversation</p>	<p>This conversation is about how you and your new employee can best interact on an ongoing basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What form of communication do you prefer? How often? • What kinds of decisions do you want to be consulted on and when can the employee make the call on their own? • How do your styles differ and what are the implications of your differences for how you should interact with one another?
<p>The resources conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will the new employee need to be successful? • What do they need you, as their boss, to do?
<p>The personal development conversation</p>	<p>Finally, discuss how this job will contribute to the employee’s personal development. What informal and formal opportunities for learning can they anticipate? (See Chapter 5)</p>

§See annotated bibliography

PART 3

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

Chapter 6

FOSTERING ACCOUNTABILITY

- 6.1 Many Ways to Delegate
- 6.2 Delegation Worksheet
- 6.3 Example of Effective Delegation
- 6.4 Quarterly Team Goal-Setting Routine
- 6.5 Prioritization Grid
- 6.6 Simple Goal Format
- 6.7 Example of Team Goals

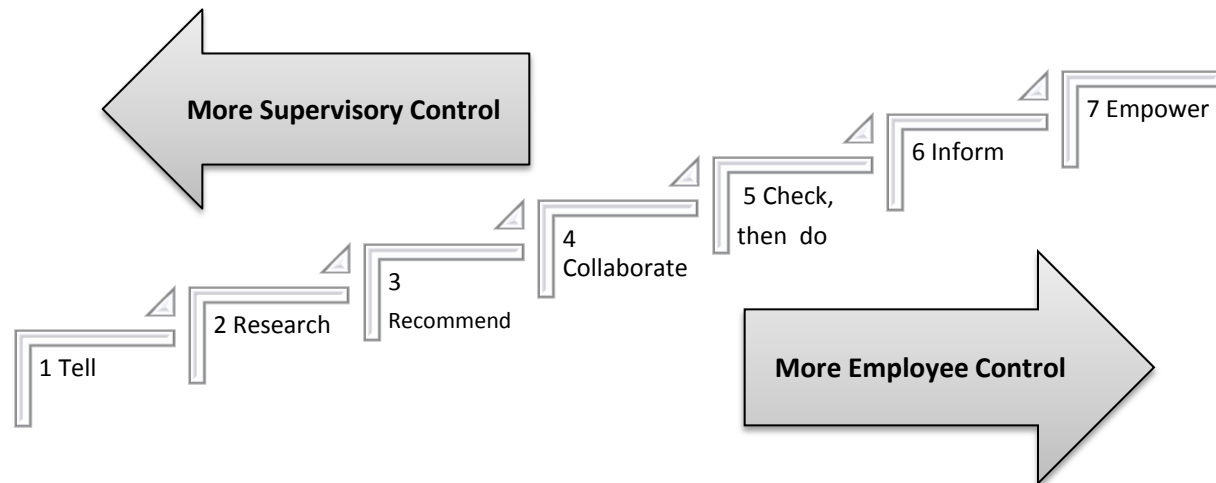
The conductor doesn't make a sound. The power comes from his ability to make other people powerful, to awaken possibility in other people.

*Ben Zander
Conductor and Speaker*

6.1 Many Ways to Delegate

In addition to distributing work, delegation can play a central role in developing employees. There is no consistently right level of authority to delegate. It depends on the experience and track record of the employee and the urgency, complexity, and impact of the assignment.

Each of the seven levels of the delegation continuum is appropriate given the circumstances. I find myself most often using levels 2 to 5, with level 4 the most common—that is, collaborating with the employee in exploring various options based on research the employee has completed.



1. Supervisor *tells* the employee what to do; employee may ask clarifying questions
2. Employee *researches* issue; supervisor decides what to do
3. Employee researches an issue and makes a *recommendation* on the best course of action; supervisor decides what to do
4. Employee and supervisor *collaborate* in exploring options and developing a solution to an issue
5. Employee decides on the best course of action, but *checks* with the supervisor for the go-ahead before implementing it
6. Employee implements the decision, but keeps the supervisor *informed* along the way

Adapted from the Leadership Continuum published by Robert Tannebaum and Warren Schmidt (1973)

6.2 Delegation Worksheet

Effective delegation is a dialogue between the supervisor and employee. Using this worksheet will guide you through the steps needed to delegate effectively. You can use the worksheet as is, or reference it as you write an email to an employee in delegating an assignment, or use it as the agenda for meeting with the employee to discuss the work that needs to get done. §

Tell the employee...

DELIVERABLE: The result you want

PURPOSE: Why this assignment matters

DEADLINE: When you want it

CHECK-IN: How frequently you want to be updated

AUTHORITY: How far the employee can go on their own [See Tool 6.1]

Ask the employee...

- What *OBSTACLES* they anticipate encountering?
- How this task fits with their other *PRIORITIES*?
- What *RESOURCES* they need?
- How confident they are in completing the task on *TIME*?

§ See annotated bibliography.

6.3 Delegation Worksheet Example

Using this worksheet will guide you through the steps needed to delegate effectively. You can use the worksheet as is, or reference it as you write an email to an employee in delegating an assignment, or use it as the agenda for meeting with the employee to discuss the work that needs to get done.

Tell the employee...

DELIVERABLE: The result you want

Interview hiring managers and prepare a report on how HR can better support their success in the selection process.

PURPOSE: Why this assignment matters

Hiring talented employees is central to the success of our organization. How we support hiring managers in finding, interviewing, and selecting talented employees is one of the main ways we in HR can contribute to our organizations future.

DEADLINE: When you want it

Draft report by July 31

CHECK-IN: How frequently you want to be updated

Show me the interview questions before scheduling interviews with the hiring the managers.

AUTHORITY: How far the employee can go on their own [See Tool 6.1]

I'll decide on next steps based on your recommendations. [Level 3 on the delegation continuum]

Ask the employee...

- What **OBSTACLES** they anticipate encountering?
- How this task fits with their other **PRIORITIES**?
- What **RESOURCES** they need?
- How confident they are in completing the task on **TIME**?

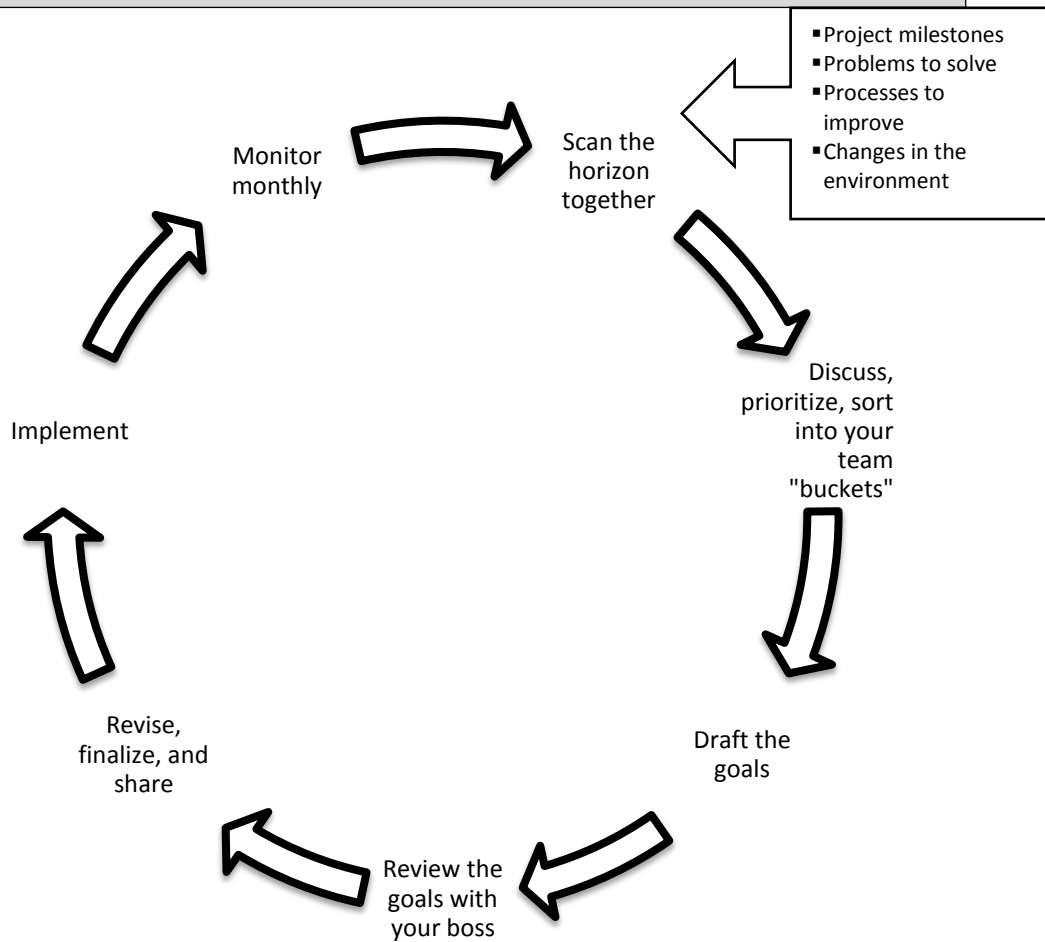
6.4 Quarterly Team Goal-Setting Routine

Setting clear team goals each quarter brings focus to team efforts and alignment with leadership priorities. Doing so answers the question, “What does the organization get for investing in your team?”

In the process, team members learn from one another, contribute their insights to support the overall team’s success, and strengthen relationships. They become more engaged and better appreciate the dynamic context of the larger enterprise.

What’s more, it’s easy to get started. As the consultant Gary Ryan Blair says, “Goal setting starts with a pad of paper, a pen, and you.”

First, sort your team’s activities into logical categories, or buckets, of linked activities. Now you’re ready to do quarterly goal-setting.



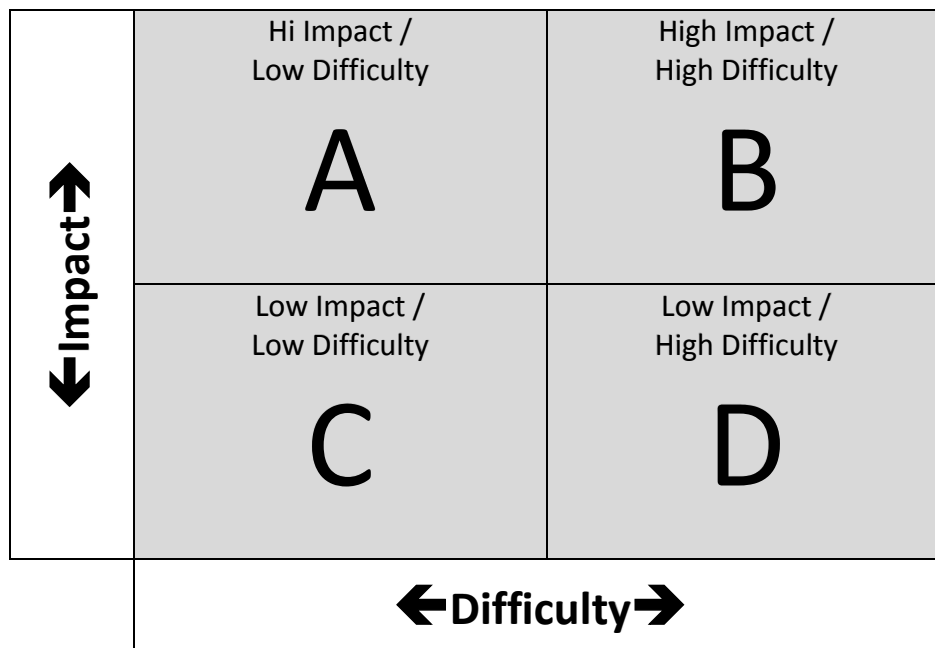
6.5 Prioritization Grid

Look at the list of things you and your team need to accomplish. One way to prioritize them is to sort each item by the impact they will have and the difficulty in achieving that impact. In other words, to what degree is the impact worth the effort?

In evaluating “*impact*,” consider the consequence of the work in fulfilling your team’s role and the difference it will make to your team’s key stakeholders. The broader and more significant the impact, the higher the priority.

“*Difficulty*” gets at how easy or hard it will be to achieve what you are hoping to achieve. What obstacles will likely be encountered? How complex is the task? How dependent is the accomplishing the goal on the actions of others outside the control of the team? How many resources will it take in time and money?

A’s and B’s should predominate. If most of your goals are B’s—that is, high impact but very difficult to achieve—reassess!



6.6 Simple Goal Format

Here is a simple, reliable format for writing clear, concise goals.

Hire an advisor by June 15 to fill a vacancy.



*What
will you
do?*

*About
what?*

By when?

Why?

6.7 Example of Team Goals

This is an example of quarterly goals for a human resources team.

Hiring	Compensation	Professional Development
<p>RECRUITMENT PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS—By the end of the quarter Implement the list of improvements in the flow and documentation of the hiring process so that the time of hiring managers is maximized and the success of selection processes enhanced.</p> <p>NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION—Finalize and then announce by November 1 the refreshed approach to new employee orientation enabling new employees experience a quality orientation experience online regardless of workplace location.</p>	<p>POSITION REVIEWS—Complete the analysis of the accounting job family and submit for position review to assure market competitiveness of these key financial positions. Due: November 15</p>	<p>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT—Meet with leadership by October 31 to obtain their endorsement for a new professional development program so that the workforce has clear guidance and support for their continuous growth as professionals.</p>
Management Development	Performance Management	Organization Development
<p>BASIC SUPERVISORY SKILLS—Complete a report by December 1 of participant experience in the basic supervisory skills program with the aim of updating and strengthening program content.</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE REVIEWS—Convene a task force of supervisors and employees by November 1 to identify ways to strengthen and make more efficient the annual performance review process.</p>	<p>CLIMATE SURVEY—Meet with leadership twice this quarter to assess their readiness to take action on the anticipated results of the proposed climate survey. The readiness assessment will determine whether we will proceed with the survey.</p>

Chapter 7

HELPING STAFF GROW

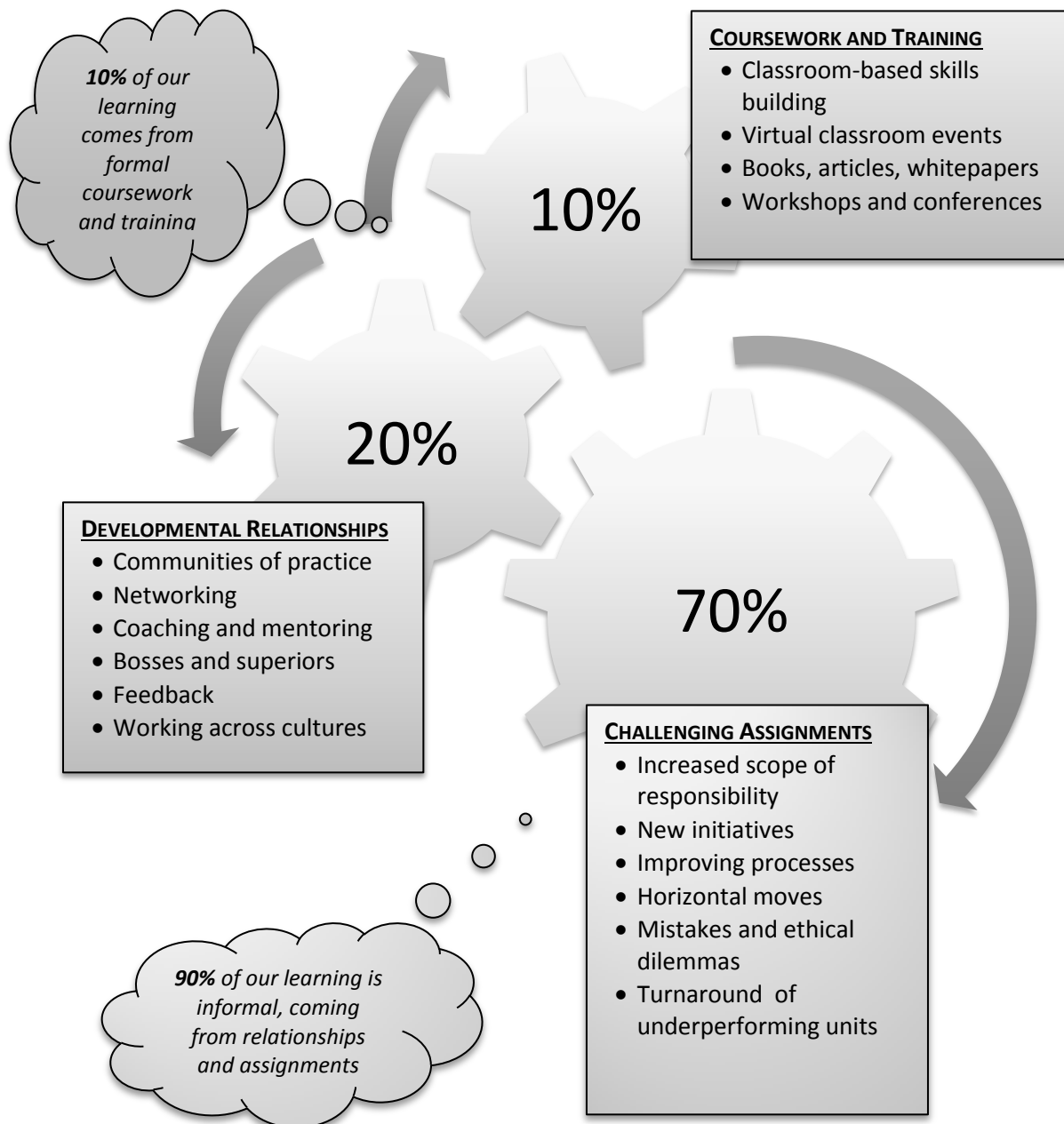
- 7.1 The 70:20:10 Rule
- 7.2 Menu of Professional Development Options
- 7.3 How to Plan for Employee Development
- 7.4 How to Evaluate Workshop and Conference Requests
- 7.5 Coach Using the G-R-O-W-S Sequence
- 7.6 Sample GROWS Coaching Session
- 7.7 Sample Stay Interview Questions
- 7.8 Sample Mentoring Agreement
- 7.9 Tips for Giving Positive, Powerful Feedback

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

John F. Kennedy

7.1 The 70:20:10 Rule

Research by the Center for Creative Leadership led to the 70:20:10 rule of learning and development. That is, “Lessons learned by successful and effective managers are roughly: 70% from tough jobs; 20% from people (mostly the boss); 10% from courses and reading” The Center goes on to note that although coursework and training are seen as contributing just 10 percent to a leader's development, when done well they have an amplifying effect — clarifying, supporting and boosting the other 90 percent of a manager's learning.



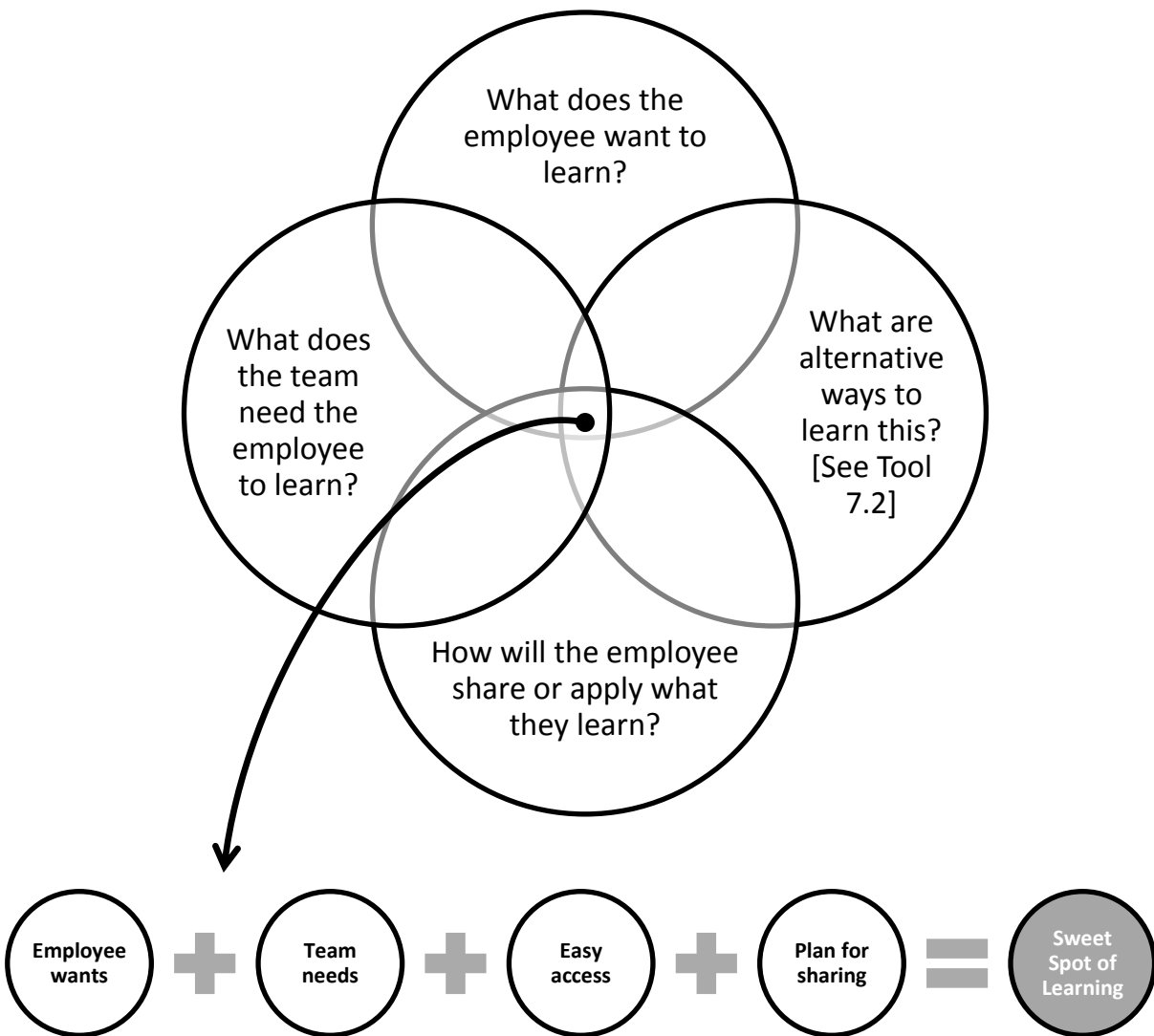
7.2 Menu of Professional Development Options

Many of our most powerful learning experiences occur outside of classrooms and conferences. This chart is meant to spark creative thinking in deciding how best to foster employee development. There are many low- or no-cost options that can lead to long-lasting learning.

Learn from the Work Itself	Learn from Colleagues	Learn through Teaching	Reflective Learning	Learn with Others
1. Take on stretch assignments (<i>assignments at a higher level of complexity and skill</i>) 2. Participate in a cross-division or office working group 3. Develop or improve a process, procedure, or practice 4. Learn and apply a new method or technique 5. Take on temporary assignments 6. Help design and lead team retreats	7. Join or start a study group, journal club, or community of practice 8. Find a mentor for yourself 9. Join a LinkedIn group at linkedin.com 10. Network (<i>meet periodically with other professionals to learn about their experiences and challenges</i>) 11. Learn from the “Digital Network” (Google, YouTube, TED, Wikis, Websites...) 12. Shadow a colleague for a day (or so)	13. Mentor others 14. Read and report to your team on what you read 15. Teach a workshop or course 16. Present at a conference 17. Share what you learn with your team	18. Write case studies and articles 19. Solicit feedback 20. Keep a journal 21. Read a book 22. Create your personal vision and mission statement 23. Clarify your values	24. Join online discussion groups 25. Take an online course or workshop 26. Attend workshops, seminars, and conferences 27. Volunteer in your community 28. Participate in professional associations 29. Take field trips with teammates to see how others do business

7.3 How to Plan for Employee Development

Professional development is ultimately the responsibility of the employee with the support and encouragement of their supervisor. This simple framework will give you the basis for a productive conversation with the employee about their learning. It balances employee interests with those of their team. It also reinforces the learning by challenging the employee to synthesize and share with others what they learned, even if it's only the supervisor.



7.4 How to Evaluate Workshop and Conference Requests

Learning occurs in many forms. A common one necessitating supervisory action is whether or not to spend the organization's money for an employee to attend a workshop or conference. These questions will help you fairly evaluate such requests.

- 1. How strongly does the workshop or conference relate to the employees job?**
 - a. Does it relate to current responsibilities?
 - b. Does it relate to probable future responsibilities?
 - c. To what extent will this build on the employee's strengths or deepen their understanding or add skills?
 - d. How strongly does this relate to the needs of the team or organization?
 - e. What is the employee's track record for using or sharing learning from past workshops or conferences they've attended?

- 2. How much does it cost in terms of money and time away from work?**
 - a. Is there sufficient budget to cover the full costs--fees, travel, lodging, and food?
 - b. Can the employee's absence be managed with minimal disruption?
 - c. Is it allowable and reasonable under applicable rules and regulations?
 - d. Are there no- or low-cost options?
 - e. Does this employee's performance merit this level of investment?

- 3. How will this be viewed by others?**

- 4. Has this employee already had this kind of opportunity?**

- 5. How easily can the learning be shared or applied?**

7.5 Coach Using G-R-O-W-S

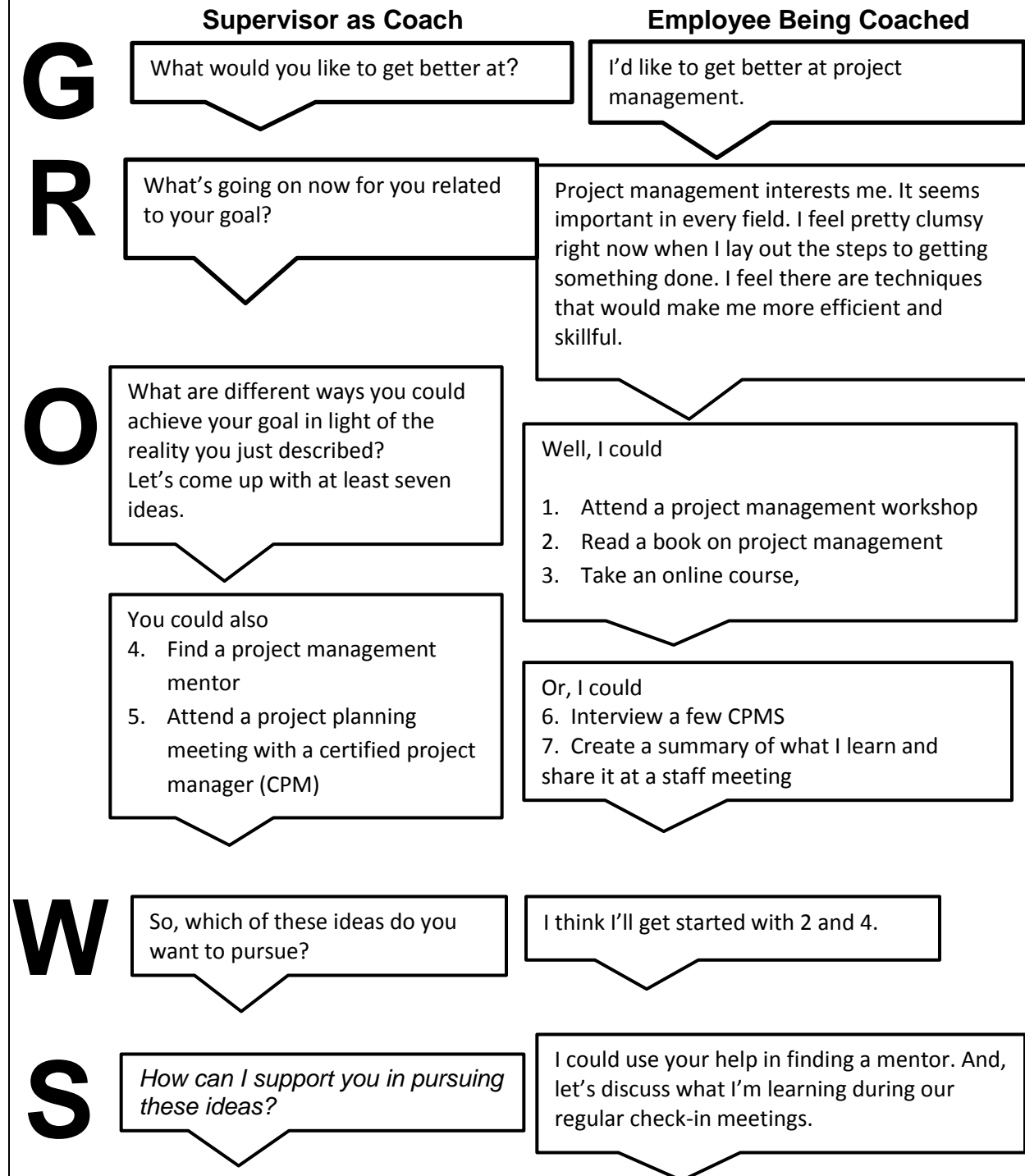
Coaching is a supervisor-led dialogue aimed at increasing an employee's effectiveness. Follow this proven sequence in coaching an employee. This order of discussion also works for many meetings and retreats!

In the Options step below, you'll notice that I suggest you come up with seven ideas. Why so many? Because the more creative and unexpected ideas often begin to emerge after the first, obvious solutions are expressed. The initial ideas may be preferred (the Will step), but they are best evaluated in the context of a broad view of what actions could help make meaningful progress towards the goal. §

- Goal** What do you want to have happen? What would success look like?
- Reality** What is going on now? What factors favor success? What obstacles might be encountered?
- Options** Given your goal and the current reality, what options could you try? What choices do you have? [Generate at least seven options!]
- Will** Which of the options will you pursue? When?
- Support** What support or reinforcement will help you implement your decision?

§ See annotated bibliography.

7.6 Sample G-R-O-W-S Coaching Session



7.7 Sample Stay Interview Questions

What can you do to help keep a good employee working for you? Conducting a *stay interview* will help you find out, and learn what might make a valued employee want to leave. Here is a sample format for inviting an employee to such an interview that includes the *stay questions* themselves. §

You are invited to attend...

The next step in your continued development.

You make a difference and I value your contributions.

Let's discuss some things that are important to you and me:

What will keep you here?

What might entice you away?

What is most energizing to you about your work?

Are we fully utilizing your talents?

What is inhibiting your success?

What can I do differently to best assist you?

Please schedule a meeting with me within the next two weeks to discuss this and anything else you'd like to talk about.

§ See annotated bibliography.

7.8 Sample Mentoring Agreement

Mentoring is a deliberate learning strategy. When mentoring relationships fail, most often it is due to unstated or unclear expectations of the mentor, the mentee, or both. The sample Mentoring Agreement below is meant to foster successful mentoring relationships through clear expectations of one another.

It should be completed by the mentor and mentee together. §

Mentoring Agreement

Employee _____ Mentor _____

We voluntarily enter into this mentoring relationship to benefit both us and our organization. We want this to be a rich and rewarding experience, with most of our time together spent on substantive development activities. To minimize administrative details, we have noted these features of our relationship:

A. Learning Objectives

What the employee hopes to learn from the mentor.

B. Confidentiality

All information shared by the employee relevant to the learning objectives will be held in confidence by the mentor unless mutually agreed otherwise.

C. Duration

From _____ To _____

Mentoring agreements are typically for a year or less.

D. Frequency of Meetings

Depending on the nature of the learning objectives, meeting at least every three to four weeks is best for maintaining the momentum for learning.

E. Approximate amount of time to be invested by the Mentor

Other than meeting with the mentee, what else will the Mentor expected to do to contribute the mentoring relationship.

F. Describe the specific role of the Mentor and Mentee

MENTOR—Describe the specific ways in which the Mentor is expected to contribute to the mentee's development.

MENTEE—The Mentee is expected to engage fully in the mentoring relationship, complete any assignments, and arrive on time prepared for meetings.

G. Termination

Either party may terminate the mentoring relationship at any time for any reason.

Signatures

§ See annotated bibliography.

7.9 Tips for Giving Positive, Powerful Feedback

When you deliver positive feedback, you help people to recognize what they are doing well, feel good about their performance, and develop their trust in you as a person who cares about their success. Positive feedback builds performance and relationships. Apply these tips so your feedback is positive and powerful. §

Be specific

It is acceptable to write a general comment such as "Great work!" but add why the work was great. The details make the message stick. Here are two examples:

Subject: Thanks, Larry!

Hey, Larry. You coming in early last night meant we could get the trucks loaded and out before the weather got too bad. As usual, your flexibility helped a lot. Much appreciated.

Mike

Subject: I liked "Vacationing at Home"

Tye, nice job on this month's newsletter! I liked your tips on staycations, which covered both simple and elaborate things to do. You gave me several ideas I am going to suggest to Ellen and the kids.

I always enjoy reading the newsletter. I am sure our clients appreciate it too. Thanks for all you do!

Dana

Avoid using the word *but* right after a compliment

But is guaranteed to erase any positive feeling in the reader's mind. Compare these statements:

I liked your rapid turnaround, but the mistakes were disappointing.

I liked your rapid turnaround. It was wonderful to get the document back so fast.

When you do need to communicate both positive and constructive feedback, include the constructive part in a separate paragraph, or at least in a separate sentence. The previous "rapid turnaround" compliment might be followed with this statement: "A few mistakes need to be corrected."

Use the pronouns *you* and *your* when making positive comments

The pronouns give credit clearly to your reader. Compare these two sets of paired examples:

The event-planning ideas were very creative and expertly carried out.

Your event-planning ideas were very creative, and you carried them out expertly.

This is the best proposal for cleanup services I have read.

You wrote the best proposal for cleanup services I have read.

Include why the person's performance or traits are valuable

Perhaps the individual's contribution:

- Made your life easier.
- Made the department look good.
- Helped a student.
- Enhanced the organization's reputation.

- Taught you a helpful lesson.
- Built goodwill.
- Increased efficiency.
- Created positive buzz.
- Saved time and money.
- Created beauty for everyone to share.
- Reduced accidents.
- Made everyone feel good.
- Ensured customer satisfaction.

When appropriate, share positive feedback with others beyond the recipient

If you communicate positive feedback in an email, for example, copy the person's supervisor on the message. If you write positive feedback for a peer on your team, copy the team on the message.

Normally copying others makes everyone feel good. However, in a potentially sensitive situation, ask yourself whether the copies could cause hard feelings. Imagine, for instance, that Joseph was named project leader, a role that Amy was disappointed not to get. Copying Amy on positive feedback to Joseph might make her feel worse.

If you find yourself saying "I have no time for this!"

Recognize that positive feedback takes just a moment. The secret to making time for feedback is to write it (or to make a note to yourself to write it) as soon as you notice the excellent work. You don't have to go into great detail. These two examples involve brief but powerful feedback:

Walking through the lunchroom, you speak to a new employee, who praises several aspects of the day's orientation program. On your smartphone, you send a text to the training designer: "Marty, I got a huge compliment on your onboarding program from a new employee. He loved the map challenge and pop quizzes. Nice work creating new evangelists!"

A couple of students tell you what a great class Dr. Smith, a new faculty member, is delivering—they tell you how energetic, well-organized and open Dr. Smith is. You grab your iPad and send Dr. Smith a message: "Dr. Smith: You've really impressed your students your enthusiasm and openness. Your energy and expertise are making a difference!"

Help yourself remember to give positive feedback

Add "Give positive, powerful feedback" to your planner or calendar as a daily activity.

Whether you are a CEO, supervisor, manager, individual contributor, and entrepreneur, or consultant, share positive feedback every day. Look for opportunities to recognize people's contributions to your success and contentment. Your positive feedback will strengthen your business relationships, making them more supportive, rewarding, and enjoyable. And it will strengthen performance!

§ See annotated bibliography.

Chapter 8

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

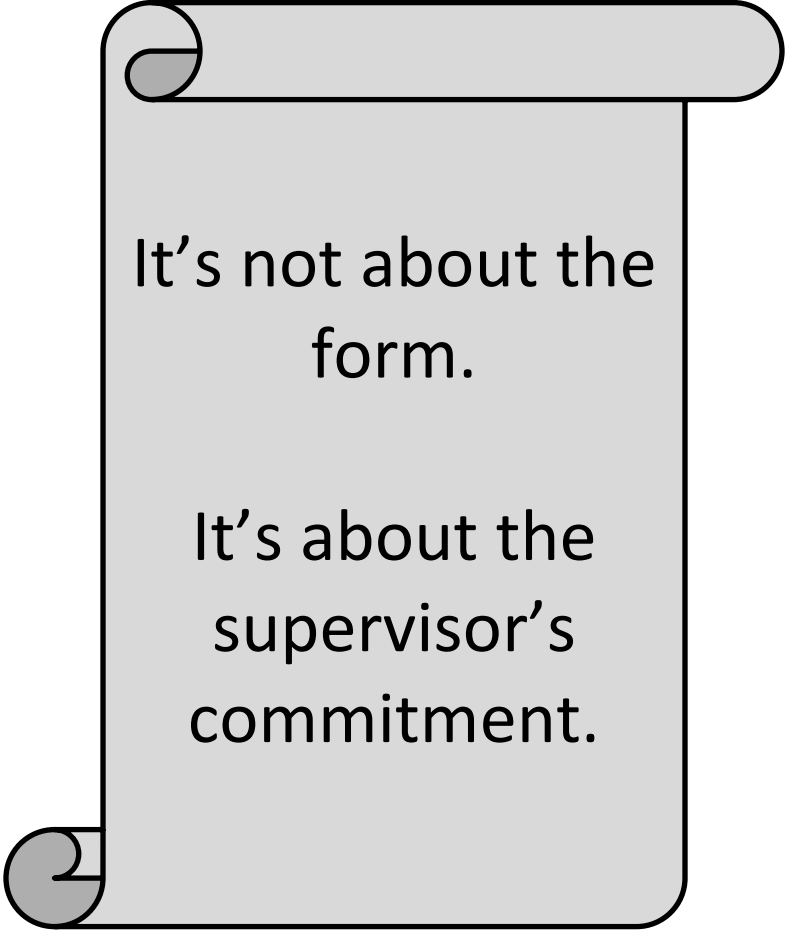
- 8.1 The Secret to Successful Performance Reviews
- 8.2 The Three Core Questions of Performance Reviews
- 8.3 Performance Review Steps
- 8.4 How to Build on Strengths
- 8.5 How to Mitigate Weaknesses
- 8.6 How to Have a Productive Performance Review Meeting

Lack of feedback is the number one reason for performance problems.

Leigh Branham
Author

8.1 The Secret to Successful Performance Reviews

I designed my first performance review form in 1974. Over the years many other forms have followed. What I've learned is that the form may facilitate or complicate communication, but in the end it is the commitment of the supervisor to the employee's development and success that matters most. Successful performance evaluations are about dialogue between two people with the aim of taking stock and planning for the future.

A graphic of a scroll with a grey background and a black outline. The scroll is partially unrolled at the top and bottom. The text is centered on the scroll.

It's not about the
form.

It's about the
supervisor's
commitment.

8.2 The Three Core Questions of Performance Reviews

In the end, performance reviews come down to helping answer three questions on the minds of employees. Spend more time focusing on future goals and learning than discussing the past.



8.3 Performance Review Steps

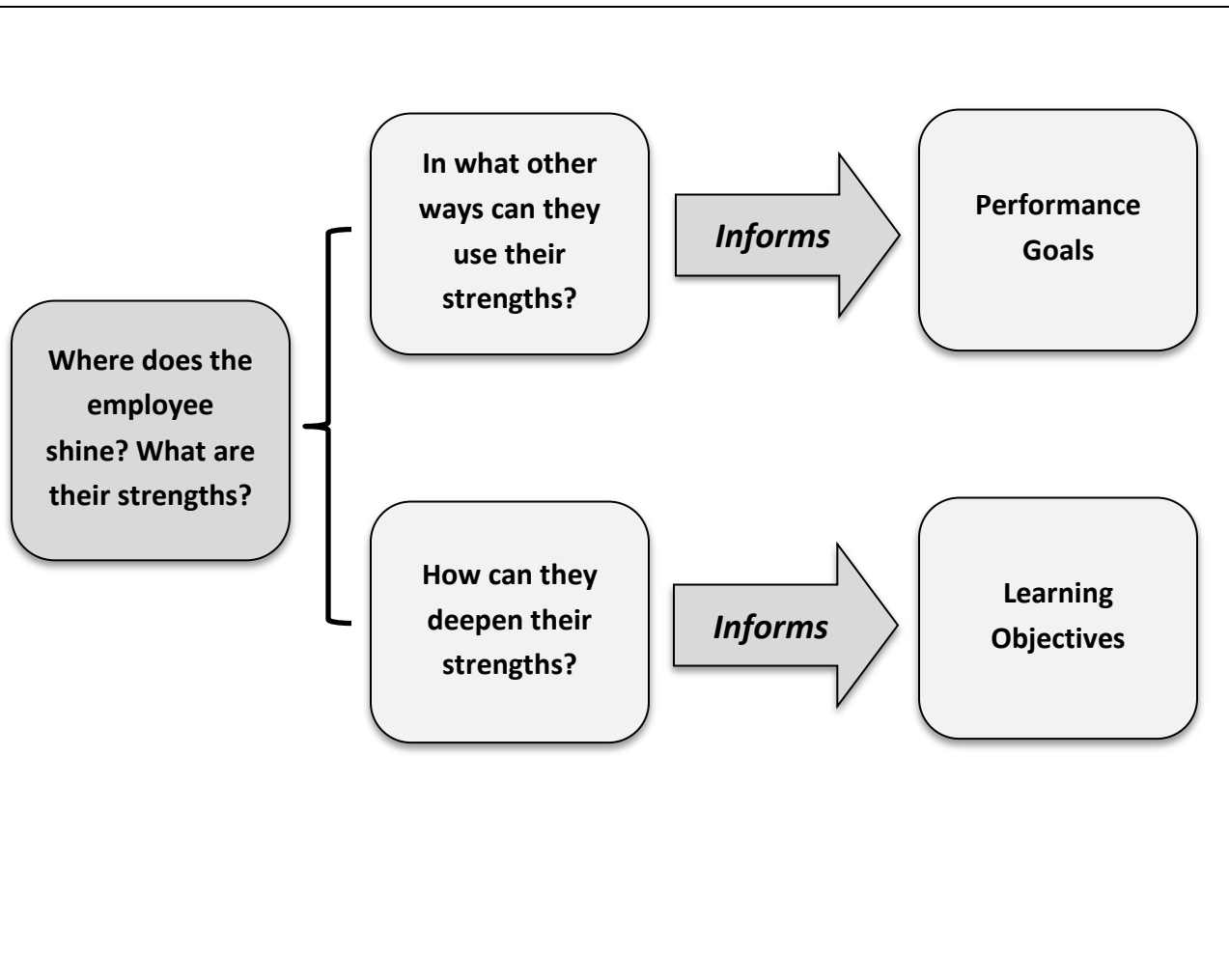
Here are the basic steps for completing a performance review. Writing and finalizing it is the supervisor's responsibility. It is his or her synthesis of their experience of the employee's performance over the past year and the employee's self-assessment combined with imagining future accomplishments and learning.

1. Make an appointment	<p>Nothing like a deadline to help get things done!</p> <p>Let the employee know when their self-assessment is due, and in what form.</p>
2. Reflect	<p>Think about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The employee's strengths and how to build on them (see <i>Tool 8.4</i>). 2. The employee's weaknesses and how to mitigate them (see <i>Tool 8.5</i>) 3. The challenges the employee faced and how they dealt with them. 4. How effectively the employee works with others. 5. How the employee could increase their effectiveness. 6. What would be beneficial for the employee to learn. 7. Review the employee's self-assessment.
3. Draft the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List the employee's accomplishments and strengths. <input type="checkbox"/> Describe any material concerns, that is, those affecting the employee's success and those that impact others negatively. Describe the desired behavior, too! <input type="checkbox"/> List two or three goals for the coming year. <input type="checkbox"/> List one or two professional development priorities. <input type="checkbox"/> Give the employee the review the day before or the morning of the review.
4. Meet	<p><i>See Tool 8.6</i></p>
5. Finalize the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Revise the review based on the discussion. <input type="checkbox"/> Send a copy to human resources and a copy to the employee. <input type="checkbox"/> Set appointments to follow-up as agreed.

8.4 How to Build on Strengths

Helping an employee identify and build on their *strengths* is the surest way to fully tap their talent and maximize their contribution to their team's and their organization's success. Follow this sequence of questions from left to right. It will help you and the employee identify specific ways to use the employee's *strengths* more fully and learning objectives to deepen their strengths even further.

You can find a fun, and free, test revealing an individual's *strengths* at the [VIA Institute of Character](#).



8.5 How to Mitigate Weaknesses

Here are a few fresh ideas for helping mitigate areas of weakness in an employee's performance.§

Can the employee stop doing this activity?

- Is this activity central to the employee's responsibilities
- If not, can the activity be stopped or shifted fairly to another employee?
- If it is, is it feasible to reduce the amount of time the employee spends on it?

Can the employee partner with others who are strong in this activity?

- Who really likes to do this activity?
- Can they teach the employee a trick or technique for how to do this more effectively?
- Can they trade activities?

Can the employee's job be modified to use more of their strengths?

- Which of the employee's strengths can they use to get the job done more easily?
- What room is there to redefine the employee's role to use their strengths more often?

How can the weakness be reimagined to make it more fun and less onerous?

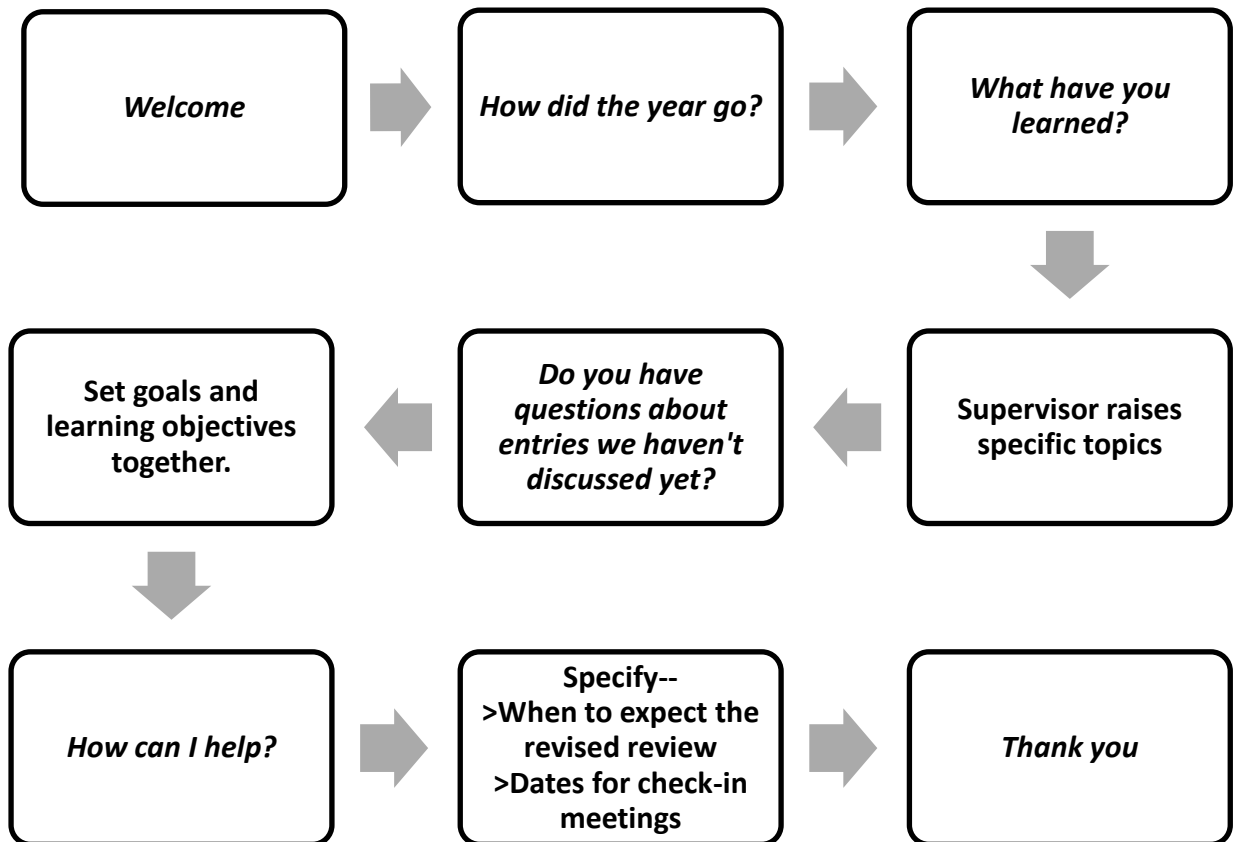
- What connection can be made between the activity at which the employee is weak to something that interests them?
- How can this activity be seen through the lens of the employee's strengths?

§ See annotated bibliography.

8.6 How to Have a Productive Performance Review Meeting

The following sequence is the genius of colleagues participating in a workshop on performance reviews. Following this sequence enables balances the voice of the supervisor with that of the employee. Doing so assures a productive meeting regardless of the form that is used.

Jennifer Berger and Keith Johnston write in *Simple Habits for Complex Times*, “The mindset of the person giving feedback has the greatest impact on what comes out of their mouth...There’s a sense that the feedback givers have access to something like the truth and also to the solution. But really you have only half the data you need (at most), because you know only what you know and you’ve seen only what you’ve seen... In short, the question we want you to carry [into the performance review meeting] is this: What do I have to learn here?”



Chapter 9

Correcting Performance Problems

- 9.1 Basic Principles
- 9.2 Ladder of Inference
- 9.3 The Four Steps to Address Performance Problems
- 9.4 The Four Steps in Detail
- 9.5 Sources of Help
- 9.6 Step 1a: Plan—Analyzing Performance Problems
- 9.7 Step 1b: Plan—Clarify Your Concerns & Approach
- 9.8 Example of Tool 9.7 in Practice
- 9.9 Step 1c: Plan—Consider the Employee’s Point of View
- 9.10 Step 2a: Meet—How to Share Concerns
- 9.11 Step 2b: Meet—Personal Presence
- 9.12 Step 2c: Meet—How to Deal with Employee Emotions
- 9.13 Step 3: Reflect & Decide
- 9.14 Step 4a: The Three Follow-up Tasks
- 9.15 Step 4b: Follow-up—Create a Meeting Record

Strong relationships, careers, organizations and communities all draw from the same source of power—the ability to talk openly about high stakes, emotional, controversial topics.

*Kerry Patterson
“Crucial Conversations”*

9.1 Basic Principles

Fairness, good faith, and timeliness are fundamental to addressing employee performance problems. These three principles apply to all interactions between supervisors and employees over performance problems, whether it is performance counseling or formal discipline.

Timeliness

- Raise concerns with the employee as soon as feasible after an occurrence.

Fairness

- Clearly inform an employee of deficiencies in their performance and give the employee a chance to correct them.

Good Faith

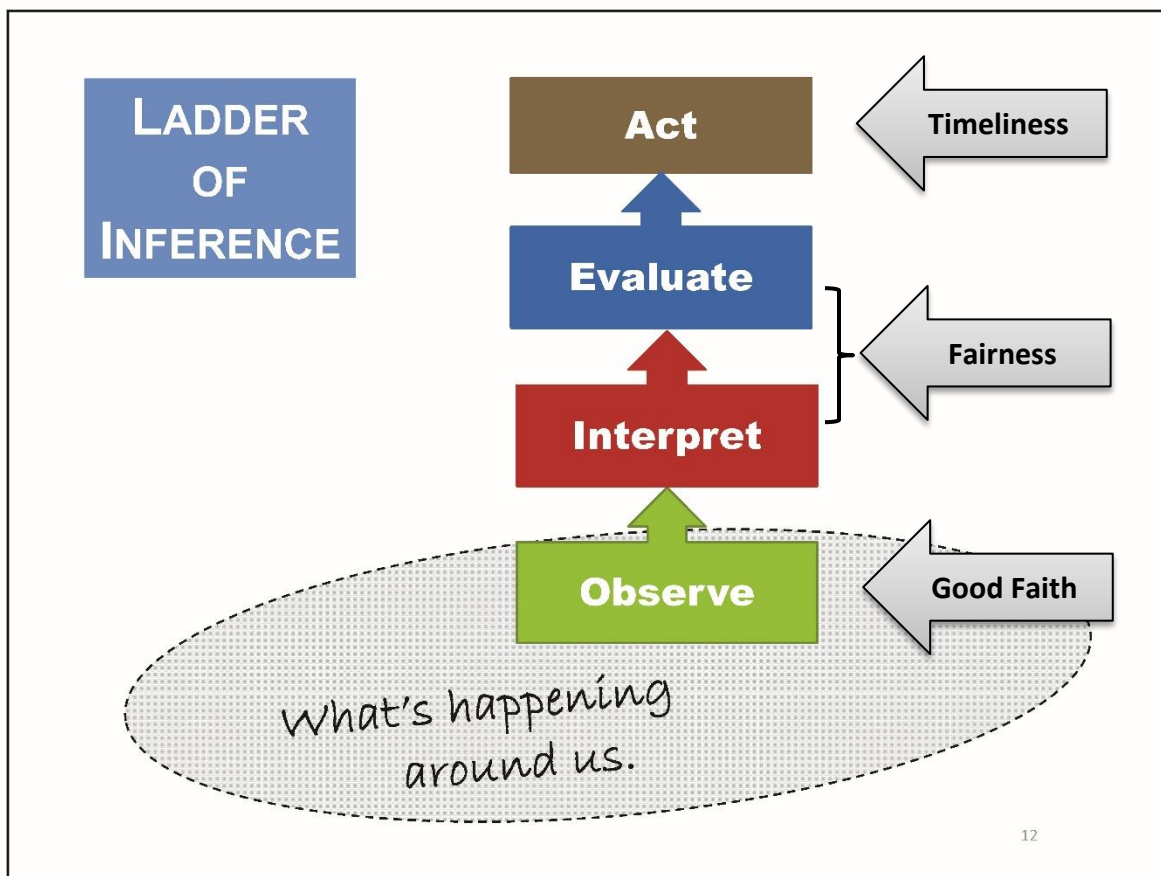
- Give an employee a fair chance to respond to concerns about their performance. You do not have to agree with their point of view; you do need to seek it out.

9.2 Ladder of Inference

The *Ladder of Inference* is included here to draw attention to the way each of us decides what we will focus on when assessing the behavior of others. In this version, the “rungs” of the ladder are correlated with the Basic Principles described in *Tool 9.1*

We begin by observing what’s happening around us. From this sea of activity we perceive the behavior of others. We interpret that behavior through the lens of our own experience. We then evaluate the behavior—good, bad, something else—and act on that conclusion.

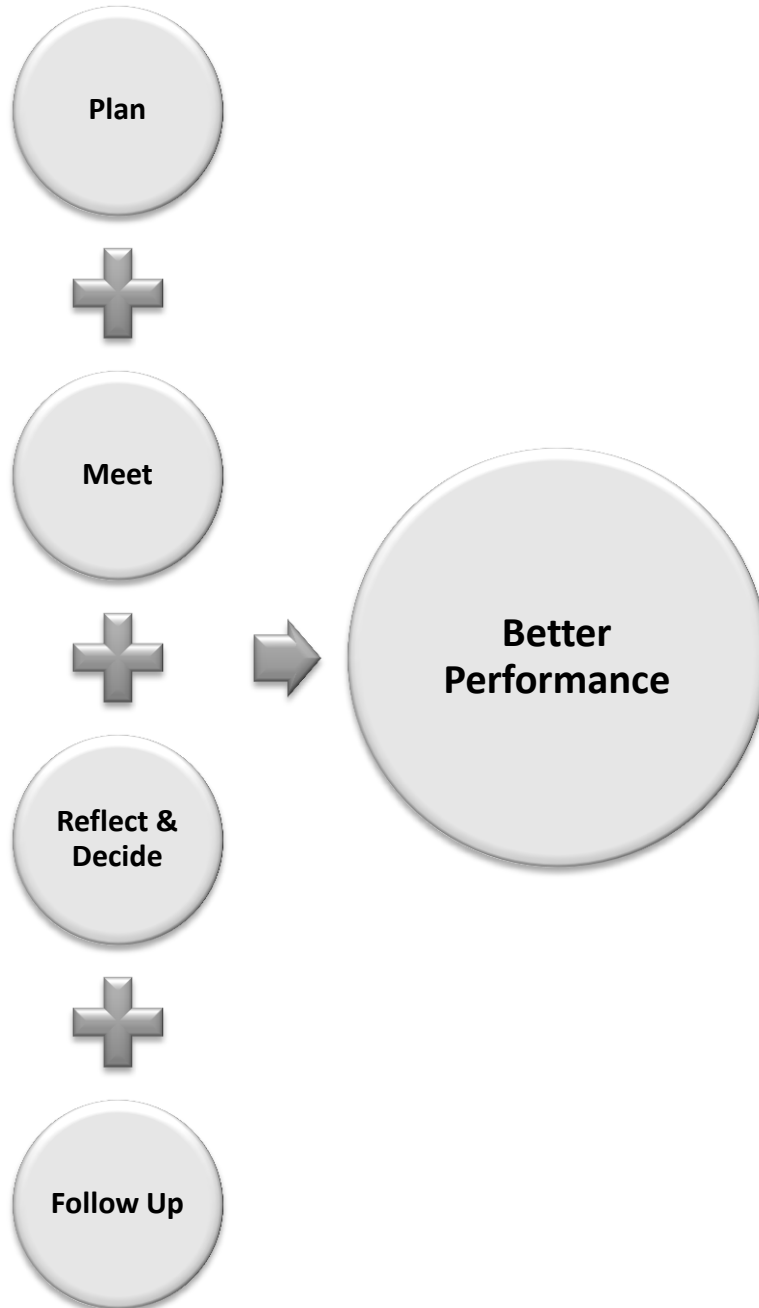
Staying lower longer on the ladder leads to conclusions and actions that are more fair and informed. §



§See annotated bibliography

9.3 The Four Steps to Address Performance Problems

For details on each step, see *Tool 9.4*.



9.4 The Four Steps in Detail

Most discussions between supervisors and employees about performance problems are best described as performance counseling. Most often such discussions succeed in alerting the employee to the seriousness of the concern and the employee is able to get their performance back on course.

Following these *four* steps will help assure your employee is informed of your concerns and has a clear sense of the steps they need to take in addressing them.

Plan

- Get help if you need it (*Tool 9.5*)
- Analyze the problem (*Tool 9.6*)
- Clarify what you want for yourself, others, and the relationship (*Tool 9.7*)
- Anticipate the employee's point of view (*Tool 9.8*)

Meet

- Be specific about the problem, the desired performance, and the consequences of improving or not improving. (*Tool 9.9*)
- Maintain your composure. (*Tool 9.10*)
- Listen actively and patiently to the employee's point of view. (*Chapter 2*)

Reflect & Decide

- What did the employee say?
- How does what they say influence your expectations for changes in their performance? (*Tool 9.11*)

Follow-up

- Send an email summarizing the conclusions of your meeting and the expectations for improved performance. Set follow-up appointments, as needed. (*Tool 9.12*)
- Document the meeting for future reference. (*Tool 9.13*)

9.5 Sources of Help

Dealing effectively with performance problems is challenging, time-consuming, and emotionally taxing. Don't hesitate to ask for help in evaluating the current performance, describing the desired performance, and preparing for the conversation you need to have.

Your boss	In addition to letting your boss know your concerns, he or she can be a tremendous sounding board for how best to deal with the performance problem and help the employee get back on track.
HR	Among the most important of HR's many jobs is helping supervisors deal constructively with performance problems. Use their experience and expertise—it's what they're paid to do.
Trusted Colleagues	Like your boss, a trusted colleague can help you gain perspective on the performance issues you want to tackle.
Friends & Family	Friends and family members have expertise and care the most about your success. Don't just vent to them, ask for their advice. Use them to practice the conversation you want to have.
Employee Assistance Program	Employee assistance programs often have unlimited support for supervisors and managers. Use them especially when dealing with issues where emotions are highly charged.
Internet	The websites of professional associations as well as general sites like About.com often provide practical tips and tools on dealing with a variety of management issues.
Legal Counsel	Attorneys help solve problems. If you have access to an attorney, their experience and expertise can be invaluable in giving you confidence in how best to address a challenging performance problem.
Internal Organization Development Consultant or Ombudsman	Larger organizations often have in-house experts skilled at facilitating conflict resolution. They can be especially useful in helping mediate or facilitate conversations involving conflict between two people.

9.6 Step 1a: Plan—Analyzing Performance Problems

The first step in successfully helping an employee correct their performance is to plan the conversation. And the first step in planning is analyzing the true nature of the performance problem.

This framework has proven itself time and again in sorting through often emotional and frustrating situations to identify exactly what is going on and what needs to change. You will see that it follows closely Tool 9.2, which introduces the Ladder of Inference. That is, it begins with observing behavior, then moves to interpretation and evaluation, and then to action.

While this analytical sequence has been around for years—I first encountered it in 1974—the specific format below I learned from Mike Buschmohle of Applause Associates.

<u>SEE</u>	<u>FEEL</u>	<u>SEEK</u>	<u>CONSEQUENCES</u>
<i>What do you see the employee doing that concerns you?</i>	<i>How do you feel about what you see?</i>	<i>What specifically do you want the employee to do differently in the future?</i>	<i>What happens if the employee changes or fails to change their behavior?</i>
Describe the behavior you observe as if it were seen through a video camera.	Describe the impact of the behavior on yourself and others; decide if the problem is worth solving.	Describe the desired behavior with the same level of specificity with which you described the problem.	Describe what the employee gains by correcting their behavior and what they lose if they don't.
WHAT?	SO WHAT?	NOW WHAT?	WHAT THEN?

9.7 Step 1b: Plan—Clarify Your Concerns and Approach

Success in sharing concerns with an employee begins with your own preparation. Reflecting on these questions will help point you to the best way of communicating a concern to the employee so that the message is clear and the relationship is strengthened.

Take a moment to write down your answers to these questions as you consider the concerns you want to raise with the employee and how you want to approach the conversation.

This is an especially helpful tool where emotions are strong and opinions differ, such as issues involving performance. I have used this tool on many occasions, for example, in working through a change of job responsibilities when I worked for a previous employer. §

Reflect

*What do I
want for
myself?*

*What do I
want for
others
(including
the
employee)?*

*What do I
want for the
relationship?*

*How would I
behave if I
really
wanted
those
results?*

§See annotated bibliography

9.8 Example of Tool 9.7 in Practice

The following example shows the kind of reflection that is helpful for a supervisor when preparing for what may be a difficult conversation about another person's performance.

What do I want for myself?

- Maintain my composure
- To be heard
- To get the employee's commitment on the need for improvement
- To be flexible on the how
- Balance the message of concern with the message of support

What do I want for others?

- A way forward that's fair
- To be heard
- Clarity and support

What do I want for the relationship?

- Keep it professional
- Lay the foundation for future collaboration

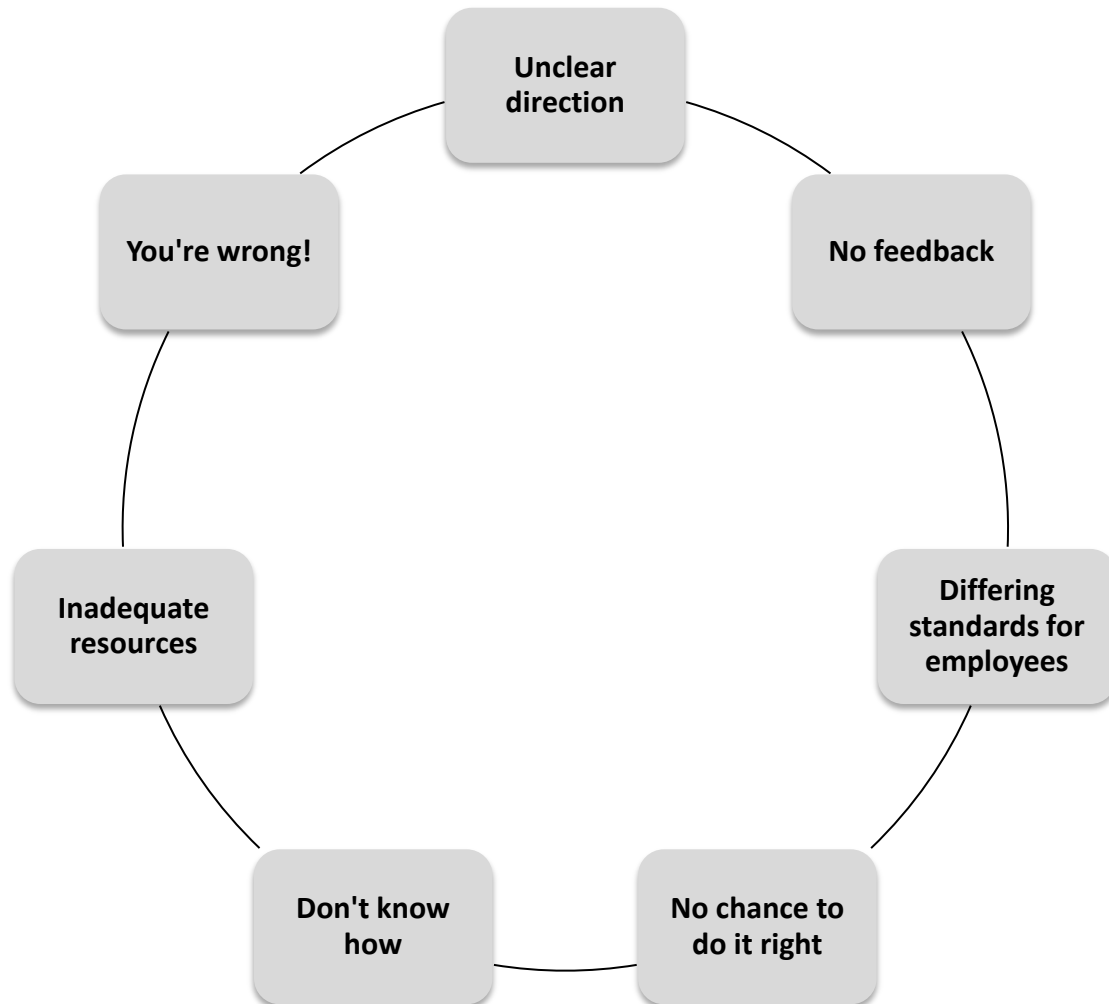
How would I behave if I really wanted those results?

- Stay focused on the performance issue
- Ask clarifying questions
- Allow the employee time to express their point of view, as well as their emotions
- Ask "What if...?"
- Don't rush
- Explain
- Reinforce that the employee is valued
- Clarify at the end whatever we agree upon
- Express support for the employee

9.9 Step 1c: Plan—Consider the Employee's Point of View

Conversations with employees about performance problems typically involve some combination of the employee listening intently, asking clarifying questions, and, often, defending their actions in some way.

Factor into your planning what you anticipate the employee will have to say on their own behalf. Which of these common defenses is the employee most likely to use? How legitimate is that perspective? How will you respond if one of these issues is raised?



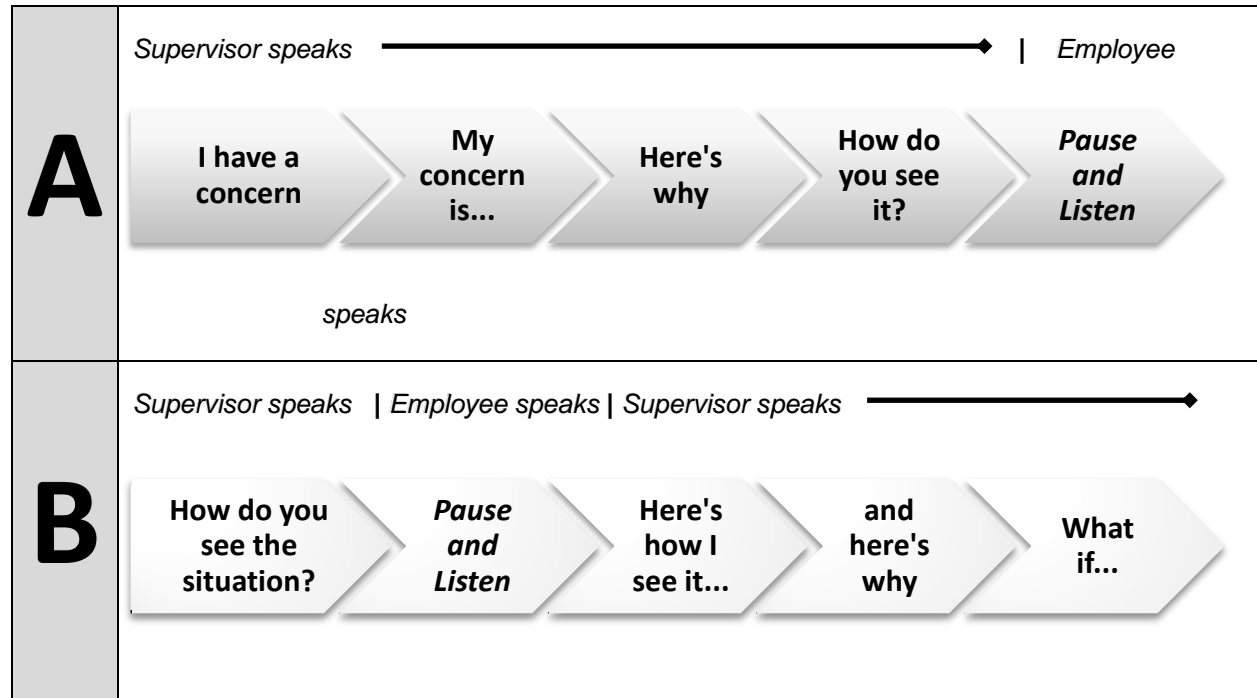
9.10 Step 2a: Meet—How to Share Concerns

Listening well plays a central role in sharing your concerns.

In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, author Steven Covey captures this notion well when he writes, “Maturity is the balance between courage and consideration. Seeking to understand requires consideration; seeking to be understood takes courage.”

Either approach below achieves the same objectives—clearly making the employee aware of concerns and hearing their perspective. “A” begins with the supervisor expressing his concern first and the reasons for them.

“B” reverses the order, with the supervisor beginning by asking for the employee’s point of view, followed by the supervisor expressing their point of view. §



§See annotated bibliography

9.11 Step 2b: Meet—Personal Presence

Discussions about performance concerns are difficult.

Supervisors must manage themselves and their emotions when meeting with the employee.

Show
respect

Be
specific

Be patient

Listen

Stay calm

9.12 Step 2c: How to Deal with Employee Emotions

Lack of confidence in dealing with employee emotions is one of the major impediments to addressing performance problems.

The list below provides specific ideas for dealing constructively with emotional reactions by employees to feedback or expressions of concerns with their performance.

- Separate issues from emotions.
- Empathize.
- Choose the right language - do not attack.
- Acknowledge the emotion, e.g. "I notice you are very upset. Still, we need to address this issue."
- Choose your environment and allow for intense emotions to subside.
- Listen and be patient.
- Know when to back off or exit the situation.
- Ask the employee if they need some time.
- Have tissues handy.
- Allow for silence.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting.
- Clarify your message: "I'm not saying you're doing a terrible job. I am saying you need to do a better job meeting deadlines."
- Apologize, if appropriate.
- Practice with a neutral party beforehand. By practicing you may be able to anticipate emotional responses or choose words that are more emotionally neutral.

9.13 Step 3: Reflect and Decide

It's important to take the time to consider what the employee has said and then decide what you will do. Have their comments changed in any way the course of action you feel is most appropriate given the performance concern?

Give yourself *TIME TO THINK* by

- *PAUSING* during the meeting to reflect on what you heard;
- *TAKING A BREAK* and reconvening later
- *SCHEDULING* a follow-up meeting



9.14 Step 4a: The Three Follow-up Tasks

Following up with the employee is a *three-step* process:

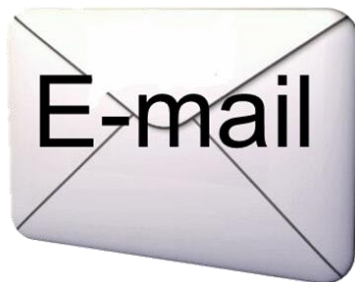
1. Complete a record of the meeting using *Tool 9.15*.
2. Document what you have concluded and the expectations for future performance in an email to the employee.
3. Make whatever appointments are necessary in light of what you have concluded. Often more frequent meetings with the employee are needed for a period of time to provide feedback and reinforce progress.

1



To record what happened

2



To confirm expectations

3



To provide feedback and encouragement

9.15 Step 4b: Follow-up—Create a Meeting Record

Complete this record as soon as possible after meeting with the employee.

This is for the supervisor's personal file. It will serve as an important reminder of the commitments to improve made by the employee.

It will also help in dealing with future discipline should the employee prove unable or unwilling to improve their performance.

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MEETING RECORD

- Names of Individuals Present
- Date, Time, and Location of Meeting
- Overall Nature of the Problem (as described to the employee)
- Outline of Main Points of the Conversation (including employee's response)
- Consequences Communicated to the Employee
- Commitment made by the Employee
- Follow-up Plan

PART 4

ADVANCED SKILLS

Chapter 10

MANAGING CHANGE & TRANSITION

- 10.1 Assessing the Potential for Successful Change
- 10.2 The Three Phases of Transitions
- 10.3 The Three Questions of Transitions
- 10.4 The Transition Curve
- 10.5 Change Management Guidelines
- 10.6 Planning Questions for Successful Change Initiatives

Changes of any sort succeed or fail on the basis of whether the people affected do things differently.

William Bridges
Author & Consultant

10.1 Assessing the Potential for Successful Change

“No person, not even an expert, unfreezes [changes] another. We move in our own way at our own pace, regardless of techniques used. We change as we have face-to-face contact with others and receive new information. We change when we listen and respond in new ways, hearing ourselves say things we never said before. We change when we think out loud with those whose actions affect us.”

“[In planning change,] I have moved away from flagging discrepancies between words and deeds to testing people’s willingness to take on important tasks together.

The assessment I recommend [below] is to find out whether the season is right for action.” §

Four Practical Guidelines for Planning Change

1. Assess the potential for action



2. Get the whole system in the room

*“When people meet across levels and lines of status, function, gender, race, and hierarchy, treating problems as systemic rather than discrete, wonderful (and unpredictable) things happen.”**

3. Focus on the future

4. Structure tasks that people can do themselves

§See annotated bibliography

10.2 The Three Phases of Transitions

“It isn’t the changes that do you in, it’s the transitions. *Change* is situational: the move to a new site, the retirement of the founder, the reorganization of roles on a team, the revisions to the pension plan. *Transition*, on the other hand, is psychological; a three-phase process people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the details of the new situation that the change brings about.” §

Endings	Neutral Zone	New Beginnings
<i>A time of letting go</i>	<i>“The Wilderness”</i>	<i>The 4 “P”s</i>
a. You have to end before you begin b. Expect over-reaction c. Acknowledge losses openly and sympathetically d. Identify what is changing, what is remaining the same e. Expect and accept grieving: Anger, sadness, anxiety, confusion, denial f. May experience some excitement g. Compensate for the losses in some way h. Mark the endings i. Treat the past with respect j. Give people information, and do it again and again k. Show how endings ensure the continuity of what really matters	a. See as a difficult but creative time, a time for sorting out b. Consider what no longer serves us well c. Normalize the neutral zone d. Redefine it; seek new metaphors e. Create temporary systems f. Strengthen connections within the group g. Use a transition monitoring team h. Use the neutral zone creatively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment • Train on discovery and innovation • Embrace losses, setbacks, or disadvantages as entry points for new solutions • Brainstorm new answers to old problems • Plan retreats, surveys and suggestion campaigns • Make time to take stock and question the usual 	PURPOSE Explain the purpose behind the outcome being sought. Why are we doing this? PICTURE Paint a picture of how the outcome will look and feel. What are people going to experience that is going to be different? PLAN Lay out a step-by-step plan for phasing in the outcome. People need a clear idea of how they can get where they need to go. What will we do on Monday? PART TO PLAY Give each person a part to play in both the plan and the outcome. What is the tangible way I’m to contribute and participate in the transition process and outcome?

§See annotated bibliography

10.3 The Three Questions of Transitions

“Getting ready to talk to the executive director of a large non-profit organization the other day, I found myself jotting down three questions that I wanted to ask her. I realized that I had been using these questions with clients, in one form or another, for some time now but had never written them out and reflected upon why I was using them. When I did so, I realized how central they are to my practice. Here they are.” §

1. What is changing?

It still surprises me how often organizations undertake changes that no one can describe very clearly. Be sure that the answer ties the change to whatever situation it is that makes the change important. The way we often say that to our clients is, "Sell the problem before you try to sell the solution." In other words, don't try to make a change to meet a challenge, solve a problem, or seize an opportunity unless you have already established the challenge, the problem, or the opportunity in people's minds."

2. What will actually be different because of the change?

Explaining the *why* of the change is essential, but it is not enough. I go into organizations where a change initiative is well underway, and I ask what will be *different* when the change is done. Driving to make those *differences* clear should be an important priority on the change planners' list of things to do.

3. Who is going to lose what?

The previous two questions, as important as they are, concern the *change*—the shift in the situation. The *transition*—the psychological reorientation that the people must go through to make the change work—does not start with a new situation. It starts when the affected people let go of their old situation. Endings come first.

Some of our clients resist asking that question. "That's negative," they say. "We want to be positive about this change."

[But] the best way to get people through transition is to *affirm their experience* and to help them to deal with it.

It is not a question of agreeing with people or being nice to them. It is simply a question of understanding how the world looks to them and using that as the starting point in your dealings with them.

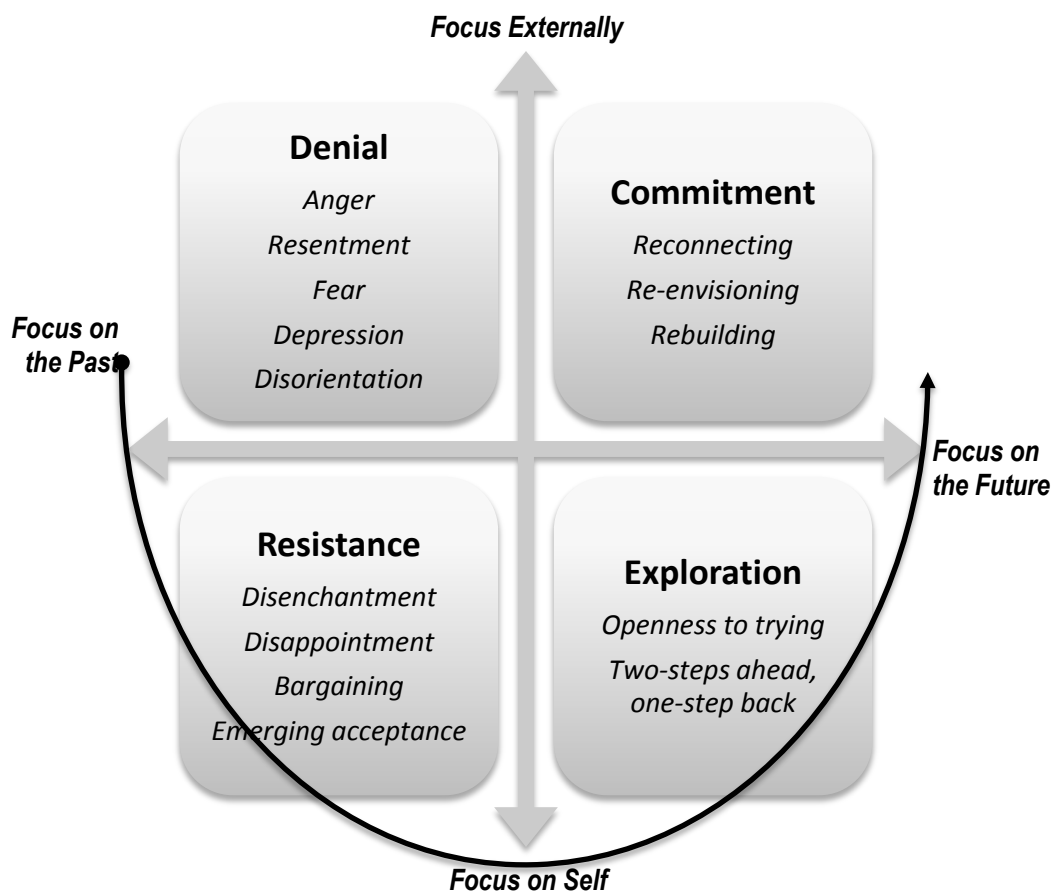
§See annotated bibliography

10.4 The Transition Curve

There are many variations of the transition curve shown here. Each depict in some way the emotional stages employees commonly go through as they move from first learning of a change to embracing it.

This version is adapted from the work of Cynthia Scott and Dennis Jaffee.

In many ways, this tool reinforces the wisdom of following William Bridges' transition model (*Tool 9.2*). Doing so respects the emotional reality of change while helping people make the transition as quickly and fully as possible.



10.5 Change Management Guidelines

These guidelines provide a logical sequence when considering how best to approach a change initiative.

Define the Issue

- Define and frame the issue prompting the need to change
- Explain why the change is needed
- Paint a picture of the better tomorrow that will result from the change

Plan/Involve

- Develop an initial plan and timeline for implementing the change
- To the extent possible, involve the people who will be affected by the change in the planning process
- Be clear about who and how decisions will be made

Implement

- Explain again why the change is needed
- Be clear about what is changing and when
- Mark the ending in some way
- Honor the past

Allow Time

- Give people time to ask questions and adjust
- Accept inefficiencies and struggles at the beginning
- Provide channels for two-way communication
- Monitor progress

Evaluate

- Evaluate the change--Did it work as intended?
 - No? Modify as needed
 - Yes? Can it be improved upon?
- What lessons did you learn?

10.6 Planning Questions for Successful Change Initiatives

This list incorporates William Bridge's wisdom from Tools 10.2 and 10.3, along with other useful planning prompts.

- What is the issue prompting the need for change?
- Who are the stakeholders and how will you include them in planning and implementation activities?
- What are the external factors and time constraints you need to consider?
- What exactly is changing and what do we expect employees to do differently as a result?
- What is the picture of the better tomorrow that will result from this change?
- Who will lose what, and what can we do to mitigate the loss, if anything?
- What part do we want people to play in implementing the change and making it operational?
- Are there old scars or unresolved issues that will need to be considered?
- How will you communicate the urgency of the change and frame the challenge clearly?
- How will you mark the ending?
- How will you normalize the “neutral zone”—the period of confusion between the ending and the new beginning?
- How will employees feed back any concerns with the change and its implementation?
- To what extent can you count on leadership for support in the face of challenges arising during implementation?

Chapter 11

MEETING TIPS

- 11.1 Seen in an Intel Conference Room
- 11.2 Sample Meeting Agenda
- 11.3 A Few Fun Meeting Ground Rules
- 11.4 Consensus Decisions Guidelines
- 11.5 Tips for Handling Difficult Behaviors in a Meeting
- 11.6 Summary: What You Can Do to Increase the Effectiveness of Your Meetings

Many companies pride themselves on having few meetings. [Apple CEO Steve] Jobs had many. He insisted that the people around the table hash out issues from various vantages and the perspectives of different departments.

From Walter Isaacson's biography, [Steve Jobs](#)

11.1 Seen in an Intel Conference Room

Some years ago I came across this sign posted in a conference room at Intel's offices in Hillsboro, Oregon. It makes clear what is expected of a meeting organizer: Don't waste people's time. Likewise, it's message to participants is equally clear:

You are responsible for the productive use of their time together.

Ask Yourself

Is this an effective meeting?

Do you know the purpose of the meeting?

Do you have an agenda?

Do you know your role and are you prepared?

Do you know how and to whom the results will be communicated?

Unless you know the meeting objective, agenda, and your role, just say no. Each of us is responsible for spending our time effectively.

11.2 Sample Meeting Agenda

According to a study conducted by the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California, the #1 reason why most meetings fail is the absence of a well-prepared agenda. An agenda is much more than just a list of topics that will be covered. Properly constructed, it will help set attendees' expectations for what will be accomplished, provide a reliable road map from start to finish, and ensure that all participants understand the roles they are to play along the way. Send the agenda out a day or two before the meeting.


Making Meetings Work

Date | Time | Room

Meeting Objective: To increase individual skills in planning and leading meetings

Desired Outcomes

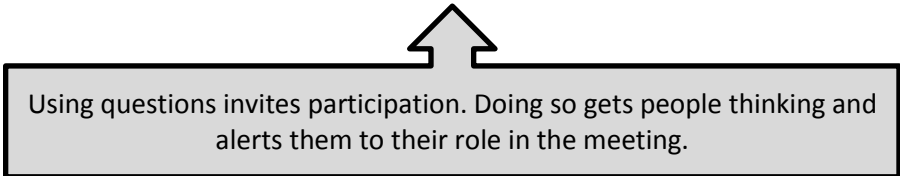
- Individual concerns surfaced and addressed
- Characteristics of and strategies to design effective meetings identified
- Useful tools and techniques demonstrated and practiced.



A good agenda will have clear objectives and outcomes

Agenda

1. What questions do you have about meeting design and facilitation?
2. What are the characteristics of an effective meeting? What can we do to have more effective meetings?
3. How do you plan and design an effective meeting?
4. How can difficult behaviors be managed during a meeting?
5. What can you do to improve your meeting management?



Using questions invites participation. Doing so gets people thinking and alerts them to their role in the meeting.

11.3 A Few Fun Meeting Ground Rules

These norms for meeting behavior were developed by a group of elementary school students in grades second through fifth. We elders would be wise to follow their guidance~

- Sit up straight.
- Don't squirm around.
- Look at who's talking.
- Take turns talking. Don't interrupt.
- Don't get involved in a side conversation.
- Don't beg to be called on. Everybody is important.
- Don't stare into space.
- Focus your attention. Daydream later!
- Don't make sound effects.
- Don't put on a show. Don't be the clown.
- Don't play with other people's bodies or clothes.
- You'll distract their attention from the meeting.
- Don't bring stuff to play with.
- Don't yawn or act bored. Be patient.
- Don't wander. It's not the time to get a drink, or to explore the room.
- Get ready before the meeting.
- Go to the bathroom, get your drink and put your stuff away.
- Be on time and stay the whole time.
- Be an active listener!
- Participate in the discussion.
- Don't make fun when other people try.
- Don't be embarrassed if you make a mistake.
- Do your best and help others do their best.
- Remember: Be serious, but have fun.
- Don't call people names.
- Don't make funny faces.
- Don't be arrogant.
- Don't laugh at people.
- Be courteous.

*Compliments of Spruce Street School, Seattle, WA.
November 15, 1996*

11.4 Consensus Decision Guidelines

Consensus is a decision you can live with following full participation. When your group reaches the point where each person can say, “Well, even though it may not be exactly what I want, at least I can live with the decision and support it,” then the group has reached consensus. This doesn’t mean that all of the group must completely agree. But all of the group must at least minimally agree.

Consequently, any one of you can block a decision. This is precisely why consensus decisions are both more difficult and more effective than other group decision methods, such as voting. It forces the group to consider all aspects of the problem and objections to possible courses of action. Treat differences of opinion as a way of:

- 1) Gathering additional information
- 2) Clarifying issues, and
- 3) Forcing the group to seek better alternatives

Guidelines

1. Try to get underlying assumptions regarding the situation out into the open where they can be discussed.
2. Listen and pay attention to what others have to say. This is the most distinguishing characteristic of successful teams.
3. Be cautious of early, quick, easy agreements and compromises. They are often based on erroneous assumptions that need to be challenged.
4. Avoid competing and arguing. In this situation either the group wins or no one wins.
5. Do not vote. It will split the group into “winners” and “losers”; it encourages “either-or” thinking (when there may be other ways) and it fosters argument rather than rational discussion.
6. The team needs all the information it can get so encourage others, particularly the quieter ones, to offer their ideas.
7. If you find you’re repeating yourselves, you can test for consensus using the “Fist-to-Five” method. Fist-to-Five is accomplished by raising hands as in voting, with the number of fingers raised indicating the level of agreement.
 - A fist means, “I vote NO.” or in consensus it means, “I object and will block consensus (often on moral grounds).”
 - 1 finger means, “I’ll just barely go along.” Or, “I don’t like this but it’s not quite a no.” or, “I think there is lots more work to do on this proposal.” In consensus this indicates standing aside, or not being in agreement but not blocking the consensus.
 - 2 fingers mean “I don’t much like this but I’ll go along.”
 - 3 fingers mean, “I’m in the middle somewhere. Like some of it, but not all.”
 - 4 fingers mean, “This is fine.”
 - 5 fingers mean, “I like this a lot, I think it’s the best possible decision.”

A low quality vote (lots of 1s, 2s, 3s) means more discussion is needed. A handy PDF with more about Fist-to-Five can be found at [this site](#).

11.5 Tips for Handling Difficult Behaviors in a Meeting

There are many ways a meeting can be derailed. Here are a few ideas for how to stay on track despite the challenges individual participants may present.

BEHAVIOR	DESCRIPTION	FACILITATION RESPONSE
Silent Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet • Keeps to themselves • Unaccustomed to large groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call on the person directly • Go around the room • Use written brainstorming • Use ground rules that call for everyone's participation • Use pairs or triads • Seat between two strong contributors
Eager Helper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to help – probably for recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give specific job to do (lights, hanging charts, etc.) • Don't over-use • Thank them genuinely
Chronic Complainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually alone in reason for complaint • Uses complaining to gain attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • "Tell us more" • Test for agreement among the group • "We've heard the negative solution, now let's hear the arguments in favor." • Structure a debate • If irrelevant to meeting, ask to discuss outside the group • If relevant, ask to discuss at a break or after the meeting.
Buzzer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whispers and buzzes to person seated close by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call him or her on it • Ask a question • Bring back into circle • Put hand on shoulder – gentle touch • "Do you need something clarified" • "Please speak up or wait until others have a chance to join the conversation"
Heckler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heckles, i.e., "This is so stupid!" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit next to him • Put spotlight on heckler • Ask others in the group, "How do the rest of you feel about what _____ just said?" • "Let me hear some opinions similar to or different from the one _____ just gave."
Data Miser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps good info to self • Self-conscious about appearing too smart or too good to peers • Fears being hung with more work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them for their opinion or experience rather than put them on the spot for information.

<p>Tangent Maker</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets group off the subject • Can be creative or exuberant person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring the group back to the topic • Use a parking lot • Acknowledge what the person said, then move on • Set aside time for rapport building • Put the Tangent Makers topic on next agenda • Ask group, "Would you like to discuss this now instead of what we had planned on the agenda?" Go with the group's response. • Ask the person or the group: "How does what we're discussing right now help us achieve our agreed objective?"
<p>Immovable Object (Dominant)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I'd rather be right than successful" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraphrase to confirm understanding • Ask <i>Why</i> or <i>Why not</i> questions to get at underlying hopes or fears behind the person's position. • Test other ideas against the Immovable Objects expressed hopes or fears • Say, "I respect your right to a strong opinion. Under the circumstances, I'll have to ask the group to go along with what's been decided. I'll take responsibility for it and will double-check it just to make sure. Now, let's get on with the next order of business."
<p>The Inarticulate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to state ideas clearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restate and check • Ask if someone in the group could build on the ideas offered.
<p>Showboat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of clowning and irrelevant patter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't invite or encourage • Thank the person for the amusing contribution, then get back on track • Talk to the person privately • Give them a role • "Interesting, _____, what do the rest of you think about what _____ just said (or suggested)?"

11.6 Summary: What You Can Do to Increase the Effectiveness of Your Meetings

Thus summation of research on meeting effectiveness is provided courtesy of the consulting firm [Scontrino-Powell](#).

In most organizations today meetings occupy a significant amount of space on the daily calendar.

The authors of this research report studied meetings in a variety of organizations to determine which factors resulted in meetings that were viewed as effective and a good use of time.

They found that successful meetings could be identified by the following characteristics:

- 1. They had a written agenda distributed in advance.*
- 2. The agenda was reviewed at the start of the meeting.*
- 3. Meeting participants were involved during the meeting.*
- 4. The meeting facilities were viewed as appropriate, i.e., good table arrangement, good lighting and heating, lack of noisy distractions.*
- 5. All the items on the agenda were completed.*

It is interesting to note that neither the number of participants at the meeting nor the length of the meeting impacted the perceived effectiveness of the meeting.

§ Annotated Bibliography

Tool	Reference
1.2	<p>Pink, Daniel H. <u>Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us</u>. New York. NY: Riverhead, 2009.</p> <p>I first encountered Daniel Pink’s work at a conference in 2010. It was at this conference that I learned of the importance of Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose as motivating factors for knowledge workers. The “Heart Chart” followed shortly thereafter.</p>
3.1, 9.2	<p>Senge, Peter M, et al. <u>The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization</u>. New York: Currency, Doubleday, 1994.</p> <p>Even 20 years on this remains an awesome compendium of insights, tools, and models aimed at creating learning organizations. Tool 3.1 <i>How to Listen</i> is taken directly from the Fieldbook. You can find much more on the Ladder of Inference [Tool 4.2] in Chapter 33 of this book.</p>
3.2, 7.7	<p>Kay, Bevery and Sharon Jordan-Evans. <u>Love It, Don’t Leave It: 26 Ways to Get What You Want At Work</u>. SF: Berrett-Koehler, 2003</p> <p>A fun book and a quick read loaded with smart and creative ways to enjoy your work more fully.</p>
5.3	<p>Watkins, Michael. <u>The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels</u>. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School, 2003.</p> <p>Meant for managers in preparing for new leadership roles, Dr. Watkins book is the best I’ve seen on helping new employees succeed.</p>
6.2	<p>Williams, Val. <u>Get the Best Out of Your People and Yourself</u>. Shadowbrook, 2002.</p> <p>Though the Delegation Worksheet doesn’t appear in Ms. William’s description of the delegation process, it was this short book that inspired it.</p>
7.5	<p>Whitmore, John. <u>Coaching for Performance GROWing Human Potential and Purpose: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership</u>. 4th ed. Boston: Nicholas Brealey, 2009.</p> <p>The GROW coaching model was originally conceived by John Whitmore in this book. It has since become the tool I use more than any other in my day-to-day work. The “Support” step was the inspiration of a friend and colleague in India—Kishore Bajaj. He felt Whitmore’s original “GROW” model was incomplete without encouragement and support.</p>

7.8	<p>Murray, Margo. <u>Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring</u>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.</p> <p>There seem to be hundreds of books on mentoring. I found this one eminently readable and practical.</p>
7.9	<p>Gaertner-Johnson, Lynn. <u>Business Writing with Heart: How to Build Great Work Relationships One Message at a Time</u>. Seattle: Syntax, 2014.</p> <p>A practical, clearly written resource for effective business writing. Full disclosure: I'm featured in Chapter 17.</p>
8.5	<p>Buckingham, Marcus. <u>Go Put Your Strengths to Work: 6 Powerful Steps to Achieve Outstanding Performance</u>. New York: Free, 2007.</p> <p>Ideas on how to creatively deal with weaknesses in an employee's performance came from this book.</p>
9.7, 9.10	<p>Patterson, Kerry. <u>Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High</u>. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002.</p> <p><u>Crucial Conversations</u> provides invaluable guidance on how to have difficult conversations when "opinions differ, stakes are high, and emotions are strong." Nearly every week I use the reflections questions of Tool 9.7 as I prepare for conversations. The sequence of having a difficult conversation about performance in Tool 4.10 was likewise inspired by this book. The reverse of it came from a workshop I did with colleagues from many countries where the more Western approach recommended by Dr. Patterson was seen as too direct.</p>
10.1	<p>Weisbord, Marvin Ross. <u>Productive Workplaces: Organizing and Managing for Dignity, Meaning, and Community</u>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987.</p> <p>Tool 10.1 is taken directly from Weisbord's minor classic of organization development. It is this book that led me back to graduate school in my forties. Full disclosure: A short essay of mine is included in the 25th anniversary edition, published in 2013.</p>
10.2, 10.3	<p>Bridges, William. <u>Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change</u>. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1991.</p> <p>Dr. Bridges' compassion and clear-thinking have been major influences on my internal consulting practice and training.</p>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For the entirety of my career I've been challenged and intrigued by the promise and prospect of creating positive and productive workplaces. I have masters degrees from the University of Southern California (public administration) and Antioch University Seattle (whole systems design). Before leaping into higher education in 2013 I worked in global health for twelve years, both with an NGO (PATH) and the University of Washington (International Training & Education Center for Health—I-TECH). The foundation of my career was forged over many years working in city governments in California and Washington.