

Title:

How To Talk To Under-Performers About Poor Work Performance

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Summary:

Managers need to empower their staff to deliver what is expected. Oftentimes understanding people's personal motivations is the key to turning around an under-performing employee, team or company. This article outlines what to say and how to listen to empower your staff to achieve personal and professional goals.

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Article Body:

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Managers need to empower their staff to deliver what is expected. Oftentimes understanding people's personal motivations is the key to turning around an unproductive employee, team or company. Never underestimate the power of sincere face-to-face dialogue as a stepping-stone to positive and consistent work performance.

WHAT TO SAY

Start your conversation by asking the under-performing person a question like "How do you feel you performed?" It is very important to understand where the person is coming from before highlighting their lack of success.

If the underperformer thinks that they are already doing a great job, then you know the person has clearly not understood the goals and what they were expected to accomplish, or they are totally out of sync with what is required.

If you ask them, "How do you think you did this year?" And they say, "I think I did very well." Reply with "Okay, if you think you did very well can you explain or just share with me your thoughts on what happened." [Referring to a particular month or a particular project that didn't go well]

Listen objectively to the under-performers side of the story and do not make

them wrong in any way. Simultaneously make a decision about whether their reasoning is legitimate or not. Then you can openly explain to them why you thought differently.

ADDRESSING PERSONAL CHALLENGES

When people are underperforming at work, there are often personal issues that may be coming in the way. Either they have a personal issue with you, another person in the organization, or with their team.

In some cases, they can actually be bringing an outside personal matter into the workplace. This is especially true for people that lack education, life experience, or an emotionally stable home. Often they are just finding life in general overwhelming and difficult to cope with. Unresolved personal issues can definitely come in the way of someone's performance.

The other thing from a manager's perspective is the motivation factor. It is wise to try to understand what your staff's personal issues are. You want to understand so that when you do put demands on your staff you are mindful of what they can or cannot handle.

You can encourage your staff to forget their outside personal issues while they are at work and actually be able to get away from them by focusing on work. If they still can't let go, you need to sit down and try and help them to come to a decision as to how best tackle their personal challenges.

LISTEN WITH CARE

Many times people have an idea about how to deal with their issues but they have no one they can trust to talk with. If you make time to listen to your staff, it is virtually impossible for them not to do better simply because they really feel that they are working with someone who cares about them.

You can be very successful at turning around underperformers, underperforming departments and even companies by really taking the time to understand people's personal motivations.

To accomplish this, create one-hour time slots for each staff/team member at least once a year to have a sincere conversation and invest the time in helping them to set their short and long term career goals. It's a good idea to do the one-on-one sessions 6 months before their annual appraisal.