

Performance Feedback: As Easy As Stop, Drop, and Roll

We all know that managers must give performance feedback. Let's face it; it doesn't happen near as much as it should. Why not? Because your managers think it is complicated and the real reason – they don't know how to do it.

Let's make it simple and make it effective. How many of you remember "Stop, Drop and Roll" – the famous fire training process we have all learned in safety courses for home and work.

Teach your managers these same terms for your feedback process and you won't go wrong. At least they will remember there is a process for giving feedback appropriately.

STOP

Stop before giving feedback – hold up. Make sure you are not reacting in the heat of the moment and saying something that you will regret later.

Think about why you must provide feedback. Is someone breaking a rule, being unprofessional, not following the right procedures? Be clear about what you must address and the severity of their action. Be clear about follow up actions that may be necessary.

Observations must be clear and objective. You want to repeat your observation when you provide feedback and you want it to be accurate. Obtain others reactions and observations if you are not perfectly clear. It is important to collect others' observations if it is a serious infraction and your feedback may include discipline or a case for coaching.

Privacy is imperative if you are providing serious feedback, especially if there may be repercussions for the individual. No one wants to be criticized or reprimanded in public.

DROP

Develop what you want to say in a succinct manner. Feedback should never be an everlasting rant or be given in during your moment of anger. You need to be calm headed and thoughtful when providing your comments.

Reactions can vary by recipient so take a moment to understand who your recipient is and what this will mean to them. Consider their style and emotional quotient when providing feedback.

Objectivity is a must when delivering feedback. Keep it about your observations or specific results.

Pretending you understand why the employee acted the way they did is an absolute no. You are not them; and are not walking in their shoes. Can you really know why they were hot tempered, failed to provide the results you expected, did not follow a specific process, or did not act professionally?

ROLL

Respectfully, in a private spot provide your feedback.

Offenses to rules, practices, or expectations need to be clearly spelled out. Don't expect that every employee has read the rules or policies. Revisit your expectations, goals, and objectives with the employee and make sure they are clear.

Leadership doesn't end with explaining what was unacceptable. Leadership means taking time to explaining alternative behaviors and results. Sometimes, leadership means ongoing coaching and working with your people to shape their behaviors. Use your Situational Leadership Model to understand where your employee is on the grid and specifically the type of feedback that will resonate with them.

Lead by example. If you want your team to achieve results following your values and your organizations' expected norms, walk the talk. Your people follow your feet not your words.

Stop, Drop and Roll – is a simple model that works for you and your managers. Being a leader requires stopping, thinking, respecting, objective feedback, and a being an active leadership model.

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