

# 5 Steps to Transform Performance Reviews from Dreaded Drudgery to Welcomed Opportunity

**Resource Type:** Articles

**Topic:** HR Risk and Employment Practices

Most of us have experienced bad performance reviews: harangues about things that already happened—things we can't change. Great performance reviews deepen an ongoing, regular conversation about performance. They are two-way conversations between a manager and an employee. And they focus on the future and how employees can reach their goals. Here are five steps to transform your performance reviews from an obligation to an opportunity.

1. **Make performance conversations a regular practice.** A once-a-year performance conversation feels so heavy it's hard not to dread it. When you talk with your team members about their job performance quarterly or even monthly, employees are less likely to feel surprised or ambushed by anything you say, because you're talking about issues before they get out of hand and while they have plenty of opportunity to correct them.
2. **Don't just give feedback, solicit it.** The performance review should focus on your employee. It should be their time to learn how to continue to grow in their role. That time should include an opportunity for them to share feedback on how their manager can make their job better. Listen calmly to all feedback. Take time to process it if you need to. Say yes to every request you can, and if you can't grant a request, explain why and offer a compromise.
3. **Approach the conversation from a strengths-based framework.** People dread performance reviews because they associate them with negative feedback. Reviews should include discussion of how employees can improve, but they should include more discussion of what employees do well and how to build on those strengths. This will empower and engage team members, and could lead them to identify new areas of growth for their role with the organization.
4. **Involve the employee.** Ask your team member for a self-evaluation. This gives them the opportunity to summarize their achievements and challenges in their own words. Give staff a short list of open-ended question prompts and several days to reflect on their answers before you meet. For example:
  - What accomplishments are you most proud of this year?
  - Where have you fallen short of the team's expectations and goals, or your own?
  - What are the areas where you most need to grow, and how are you working to do that?
  - How can I more effectively support your progress and success?

Ask your team member to add any topics they wish to discuss to the agenda for their review.

5. **Talk about career goals.** Your ongoing performance conversations should include discussions about what the employee hopes to accomplish in their career in the long term. At performance reviews, talk with your employee about concrete steps you and your organization can take to help them develop new skills and experience that support their immediate and future career plans. Put in writing the steps you and the organization will take to support your team member's career development, just as you put in writing steps your employee will take to improve their job performance.

## Additional Resources

- [13 Performance Review Tips That Actually Improve Employee Performance - Quantum Workplace](#)
- [A First-Time Manager's Guide to Performance Reviews - The Muse](#)