

WHAT'S YOUR FEEDBACK GOAL?

5 GOALS

To Focus On
When Giving
Employee
Feedback



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEEDBACK GOAL:
DEVELOPING LEADERS

3

FEEDBACK GOAL:
PAVING CAREER PATHS

7

FEEDBACK GOAL:
TRANSPARENT EXPECTATIONS

11

FEEDBACK GOAL:
CLARITY IN COMMUNICATION

14

FEEDBACK GOAL:
IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

17

There is an ongoing debate about whether or not performance reviews are necessary within an organization. Many companies have gotten rid of them because of the unnecessary stress it puts on employees. Others have because they find them pointless. Maybe the problem is not in the performance review itself. Maybe the problem is discovering what the feedback goal of the performance review is. Do you know what your feedback goal is? Let's find out:

FEEDBACK GOAL: DEVELOPING LEADERS

Howard Schultz, Sheryl Sandberg, Steve Jobs, Richard Branson. Household names for one reason: they lead. Whether you agree with their business acumen and management style or not, these individuals rose to a position of great influence, control and power. Organizations with a true leader have the capacity to move mountains. Organizations with just the opposite become extinct.

Acknowledging the power leadership has, why then, is leadership development failing?

- 36% of organizations surveyed in Brandon Hall Group's 2015 study say their **leadership development practices** are still below average or poor.
- CEB reports that 63% of **leaders lack the required abilities** to achieve success today.
- Building up our current workforce into leaders of tomorrow is the step to take now to thwart the threats poor leadership brings. Feedback can be used to reinforce positive behaviors and diminish bad ones.



INSTILL CONFIDENCE



Employee: “Sometimes I think I am too young and too low on the totem pole to be seen as a leader. Receiving a feedback critique with a Leadership indicator shows that my manager is thinking of me in a way I was unsure of before. It’s empowering!”



Manager: Globally, 53% **of individual contributors dream of being the leader** or most senior executive at their current company. While it’s impossible to have all employees fit the role of executive, it is important to inspire all employees to step up to the plate when it comes to their respective job duties. Leading isn’t always a management title, sometimes it’s the ability to push employees to take on tasks and projects. When I provide feedback on my directs’ Leadership, I’m able to note examples of initiative and encourage the employee to continue pushing that envelope.



“

Leaders don’t create followers, they create more leaders.

@tom_peters

COACH EM’ UP



Employee: I strive to be a leader but I’m not always sure what to do. How am I seen from management and how am I seen from my peers? I look forward to receiving feedback regarding my leadership. It’s like having a mini coaching session from my manager!

—————> [Read more about coaching teams here.](#)



Manager: Sending an employee Leadership feedback is an opportunity to pass the specifics of what I need from the individual in order to see their career rise. I have used our real-time PM tool, iRevü, to begin a conversation, starting with advice on professional traits to develop and offering the chance to take on a larger role within a project. It not only allows me the opportunity to coach my employee, but it gives goals to be followed up with over time.

FRAME IT



Employee: I receive criticism better just because of the Leadership goal tag attached to it. I know the critique is in hopes of improving my leadership skills, so I take the feedback in a better mindset. Setting the framework of feedback is important for how it is received, absorbed and built upon.

“ We change our behavior when the pain of **staying the same** becomes greater than the pain of changing. Consequences give us the pain that motivates us to change. ”

- Henry Cloud



Manager: Criticism is difficult to receive and, often, just as hard to give. Sometimes the reasoning behind the tough topic is lost from the very beginning, especially in sensitive situations like a job. A leadership tag reminds my team exactly why I'm doling out constructive feedback. At the end of the day, I see potential in the recipient and it's important to me that he or she sees that when I'm discussing hiccups.

—————> [Read more leadership tips here.](#)



LEADERS OF TOMORROW

Forming quality leadership attributes in our current workforce ensures sustainability for the future. Do your duty as a manager to build up and develop where you can. Not every employee is destined for a C-Suite job, but leading can come from any level of the organization. Show your employees you care enough about them and the future of the company to review them. Be a leader by developing one.

"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things." -Ronald Reagan

Leaders can come from anywhere in a company. Instilling leadership qualities in employees by giving them feedback helps them realize the amount of potential they have within a company.



“ Be a leader by developing one.”

FEEDBACK GOAL: PAVING CAREER PATHS

Feedback is no longer a management nice-to-have, it's fundamental and necessary to engaging and retaining employees. The annual performance appraisal has moved **past its shelf life** and is now relegated to the land of fax machines and the personnel department. In its place sits microfeedback, constructive criticism and focused career pathing. The art of microfeedback, however, can be derailed when management, employee and technology fail to ask the all important question: What is the goal of this feedback?

Feedback can come in the form of accolade or constructive criticism, it can focus on strengths or weaknesses, but if it has no goal, it can be worse than worthless. Feedback without a purpose can be detrimental.

Whether feedback helps reinforce positive behaviors, nip bad habits in the bud, or to improve productivity, setting a goal for specific feedback can help give it even more meaning and attach it to an overarching goal. We don't grade performance once a year anymore because it's not specific enough nor helpful in today's fast-paced learning and working environments. Why repeat the same bad practice in giving feedback?

—————> [Read more about the dreaded annual review here.](#)



The next goal we want to explore is **Career Paths**. An employer or manager might select this option when they are giving criticism that is not chastising the employee for any wrongdoing, but rather showing them the proper way to do it in the future.

BIGGER PICTURE



Employee: I want to know my organization sees me as part of a larger picture than just my immediate deliverables. Receiving feedback with the Career Paths attached tells me my boss is thinking about me as integral to the company as a whole, and someone who will grow with it.

68% of employees say their managers aren't actively engaged in their **career development.**



Manager: When I send constructive feedback, it's important to me that my employee knows that it's not an indication of misbehavior, but a piece of feedback designed to prepare them for the career path we've built together.



PROMOTE FROM WITHIN



Employee: A Career Path indicator shows me I have the opportunity to move up in the organization and contribute in a bigger way than I previously thought. A simple nudge towards a different department, or an added responsibility means my boss is thinking of possible future promotions like I am.



Manager: When I provide positive reinforcement, attaching a Career Path indicator helps me to focus on what I want this employee to achieve and aspire to. It helps cement goals and future positions as something to work toward together rather than just being another useless “atta boy”.

42%

The 2015 SHRM Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement report found that 42% of the workforce views an organization’s commitment to professional development as very important, yet only 23% are currently satisfied with their company’s development policies.

FINDING FIT

*“Feedback is an opinion, grounded in observations and experiences, which allows us to know what **impression** we make on others.” — @sherylsandberg*



Employee: Am I the right person for the job? It may be hard to hear, but feedback in the Career Path department can help guide me towards a job or department more of my style and speed. They know more than me, and if they see my potential in a different area, I want to hear it!



Manager: I’ve used Career Path feedback to guide employees who are struggling to get into a department or onto a team that is a better fit for their skills, aptitude and working style. Instead of pointing out that they are failing to meet goals in Dept. A, I can show them how their skills will work a little better in Dept. B. We’ve also used the feature to create a plan over months or even years for employees to move from one place to another within the organization, and frequently reminding them of those goals so they don’t get caught up in the day-to-day.

PAVING A PATH

Pointed and specific feedback goals can help shape how opinions and evaluations are delivered and received. Helping to guide career development, internal promotion and the age young questions of cultural fit are all outcomes of Career Path feedback goals. When giving feedback do you categorize your goal?

For employees, this option creates a better frame for the picture of feedback managers are often trying to create. For managers, it's helpful to view feedback in the context of a specific internal goal, stripping feedback down from any emotional or in the moment entanglements.

When you conduct performance reviews, do you take the time to discover what goals it sets for you and the employee? If not, you should. By being intentional about giving feedback and categorizing your feedback effectively, managers and employees will have more productive conversations and resonate better - resulting in superior engagement levels.

Being clear and concise with employees, whether it's during a performance review or otherwise, helps them to focus on the work at hand that needs to be done, instead of focusing on whether or not they are doing something right.



FEEDBACK GOAL: TRANSPARENT EXPECTATIONS

53% of employees say performance **reviews don't motivate** them to work harder. That's why organizations and HR departments slash the annual performance review in lieu of better, more efficient ways to deliver assessments. A quick, concise and pointed nugget of feedback able to be absorbed right away is becoming our bread and butter. As a manager, you are sending microfeedback with a specific goal in mind for your employee.

So far, we've explored Leadership and Career Paths. Our next feedback goal cuts down the confusion and ambiguity in work responsibilities, much needed in a fast-paced and dynamic workforce. A performance feedback goal with the tag **transparent expectations** brings the team back on the same page with the same destination in sight.



REDUCE ANXIETY



Employee: Some of my biggest anxieties and stresses come from when I am left in the abyss of uncertainty. Am I doing everything I should? Am I missing something? Am I doing this how they want? What is priority? A transparent expectation goal lets me in on the inside knowledge. Now that I know where I need to go, I can map my route to get there.



Manager: Gallup reports that only 12% of employees “strongly agree” that their boss helps them **set priorities at work**. Perhaps because expectations aren't appropriately qualified or communicated. Selecting transparent expectation helps me to create pointed tactics each employee can refer back to when they are struggling. It also makes the pathway to success so much clearer, for them and for me.

—————> **4 Employee Feedback Advice Pieces You Can't Miss.**

SHARED CULPABILITY



Employee: Receiving critical feedback is not always easy to swallow. However, when I see the transparent expectations tag, I know this is something my manager and I both need to improve on, and both need to take culpability for. Our lines were crossed where communication was not 100% clear on either end. The microfeedback resets our compass.

GEN X'S TOP ATTRIBUTES OF THE PERFECT BOSS:

- 1 Transparent and readily shares information 42%
- 2 **Clearly defines goals** and expectations 42%
- 3 Ethical and fair 37%



Manager: I've been working here for some time, so occasionally I ask someone to do something with the assumption they already know how it's done or why we do it. That's not fair to a newer worker, who may have no idea of the reasoning or ultimate goal of a specific task or project. When I use transparent expectations, it makes it obvious that I should have stated something specifically from the get-go and am now doing so. There is no ambiguity for the employee and I know I've made myself heard.

SOMETHING TO BUILD ON



Employee: I would rather know now that I have slightly oscillated from the path. If my manager had let me continue on where I was going, I would have ended up miles away from our intended target. I can build on this information to focus my attention and efforts on where they should be, all while the elusive calendar date for my annual collects cobwebs.



Manager: Sometimes we let go of employees before they're given an appropriate chance. Usually, it's because a manager somewhere was afraid to confront on expectations not being met. If this is you, take heart. Because of the shared culpability in transparent expectations goal, it makes it a little easier to give much needed feedback in near real-time before your employee goes beyond the point of no return.

—————> **6 Schemes to Supercharge Low-Performing Employees.**

SYMBIOSIS

Choosing feedback goals helps focus attention and improve behavior. Added bonus? Employees are more motivated and engaged knowing exactly what and how they need to produce within the workplace. Using microfeedback, minor performance issues can be addressed immediately, melting the snowball effect. Teams are better managed when tweaked and supported, not overhauled. Trust in your team and they will respond to you.

“What's measured improves.”

— Peter F. Drucker

Sit down with your employee and find out where they want to go in their career. Is there a way you can help them get there? Communicating with them is the best way to find out.

FEEDBACK GOAL: CLARITY IN COMMUNICATION

Good communication is underrated. So much of the working day is spent talking through ways other than face-to-face, but not enough emphasis is put on quality of communication. Messages can be misunderstood and feedback can be taken in the wrong way. 86% of employees and executives cite lack of collaboration or **ineffective communication** for workplace failures. Our next feedback goal deals with the important communication nuances of the workplace.



OPEN CHANNELS

By giving feedback with a Communication goal attached, two birds are killed with one stone. Lines of communication between manager and employee are opened merely by the fact that feedback is sent and second, the employee is meant to understand that communication is currently an issue that the manager is willing to work with him or her to solve.



Employee: It's hard to tell exactly what is going through my manager's mind day-in and day-out. Being new, and having a manager more on the introverted side, it's taken some time to learn what a good job looks like in her eyes. Feedback with a communication goal attached clears up any miscommunication between us.



Manager: When I select communication as the focus for feedback, it can open doors for my employees to tell me what I might be doing wrong when I communicate with them. In one instance, what I thought was an issue on the part of my employee ended up being a great learning experience for me. Communication takes many forms and learning those of my employees is just as important for achieving peak productivity and engagement.

—————> [Read more about workplace communication here.](#)

THE SIMPLE THINGS



Employee: I like to believe my quality of communication skills are a key reason why projects run smoothly. However, I feel it is overlooked when it comes to evaluating the end project. When I receive feedback with communication attached, I know the extra time I took to explain things in full was noticed and appreciated.



Manager: Companies and organizations that communicate effectively are 4.5x more likely to **retain the best employees**. When I send an accolade with communication attached, I can specifically call out great communications. This, quite simply, rewards excellent communication and teaches my people that it gets results and recognition. When my whole team is working toward great communication, we all win.

BETTER TEAMMATES



Employee: People communicate differently. Am I coming off as too abrasive? Are my words taken in the wrong context? When I learn from my boss how my communication style comes off to others, it gives me the chance to reflect and improve on my teamwork. I don't want to come across a certain way, so I can nip bad habits in the bud if I see them coming through in my reviews. I want to be a manager one day, so learning good communication tactics now with my team will help me tremendously down the line.

39% of surveyed employees believe that people in their own organization **don't collaborate enough.**



Manager: Part of communication is understanding the nuance and subtlety that can be lost in certain forms of communication. If I notice someone turning off her co-workers because of her communication style, I can send quick feedback to steer her in a different direction. A simple tip about sending bulleted emails no longer than 200 words or having a call with a designer rather than an email may be the only thing missing from her style. I can help her adjust that without calling her work product or actual performance into question.

—————> [Read more about high-performing teams here.](#)

Email, chats and intranets have replaced meetings and phone calls, but the end goal is still the same: clarity. Delivering messages from one party to another where everyone is on the same terms, is easier said than done. Start evaluating an undervalued skill in the workforce and watch the teamwork, efficiency and performance rise.

*"Communication - the human connection - is the key to personal and **career success.**"* — **Paul J. Meyer**

What is one goal of communication within a company? To help an employee grow and increase their overall performance. If an employee is struggling, talk to them and find ways in which you can help them enhance their performance.

FEEDBACK GOAL: IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

The growth of an employee, from day one to the day they move their picture frames to the **corner office**, is dependent on a culture of good management. And good management is not always fun. Pointing out and shelling out negative commentary to your employees is not easy on them or you, but we all know it's a necessary way to build and mold employees into engaged, high-performing ones.

Highly engaged employees are 38% more likely to have **above-average productivity**.

Our next feedback goal talks about the traditional goal of performance reviews: improved performance. How and when managers critique can make differences in how employees accept and respond to feedback.



INSTILL CONFIDENCE



Employee: These ones are the toughest to take. Giving feedback with an improved performance tag is pointing out an area in which I am not excelling. Maybe I have been letting that area slide a bit without even noticing. Although not the most fun to read, this feedback gives me a reset on where my performance is in a key area. Bonus: When my manager gives me some quick tips on how to improve, it keeps me motivated!



Manager: The Improved performance tag is really hard to send. In fact, sometimes I try to find another tab to select because this is by far the most critical feedback to give. But as a manager I know it's not fair to my employees to let them continue to be subpar. One of the benefits of being able to deliver this feedback on a weekly basis is that I can tie this to one action, activity or project, without making the employee feel their entire work product isn't working.

—————> **Did you miss it? Motivate your teams with these 5 Tips.**

JUST IN TIME FEEDBACK



Employee: I would rather know right away about subpar performance. Sometimes I think I am doing a good job, but in reality there are some things I am not accounting for. When I receive this feedback it tells me how I can adjust my behavior and performance before I repeat the same mistakes. Better now than later!



Manager: 45% of HR leaders do not think **annual performance reviews** are an accurate appraisal for employee's work. And it's probably because they aren't. I don't know about you, but I'd rather tell you tomorrow that today's behavior was not okay or that your project is falling behind schedule. I'm not going to remember anything but the truly stellar or truly heinous at year end. Of course, the annual is going extinct. Business moves way too fast for managers to sit on a list of grievances.

—————> **3 management tactics your employees LOVE.**

SPECIFICITY



Employee: It has always bugged me when a parent, coach or a manager gives a general reprimand to the entire group when only one or two people have done wrong. Attaching an improved performance tag to feedback keeps the playing field fair. I know my manager is giving feedback to the person it's about rather than the whole team. Even if it's me, I appreciate the specificity so the group doesn't have to second guess any of their performance.



Manager: A new Gallup study finds that 50% of the 7,200 adults surveyed left a job “to **get away from** their manager.” This could be because, as mentioned above, it's really hard to confront when someone's performance is a big stinky cheese. It's easier to address the group than have that squirmy, awkward conversation with one person. A private message about specific behavior makes the conversation easier.



UP AND UP

Keep your employees in the loop so they can improve. Even if the feedback is negative, which they may tend to be more with this feedback tag, knowing where one stands is useful information in a work environment, and it's not always apparent to everyone in the room. Follow up critiques with constructive advice on how to move forward. Performance reviews are necessary to build up your team and your business. Your employees understand that and want to give you their all. Keep the channels open and move forward.

“ Management by **objectives** works if you first think through your objectives. Ninety percent of the time you haven't. ”

- Peter Drucker @DruckerInst

CONCLUSION

Feedback is so crucial to any organization to help them thrive. Employees should know what they are doing right and what they aren't in order to increase their individual performance, as well as the company's overall performance. Discovering the goal of your performance review and sticking with it will help to shut down the performance review debate once and for all.

Specifying goals when providing feedback is incredibly important to running a smooth performance management process. Whether you're looking to improve communication, provide transparent expectations, develop leaders, pave career paths or improve performance overall, aligning preferred outcomes with performance feedback is a must! Clarifying desired feedback goals gives employees the overarching direction they need which ultimately places your organization on the right track towards increased productivity, engagement and profitability.

This whitepaper is brought to you by iRevü: a real-time performance management solution that helps organizations save money and improve productivity. [Sign up for a free trial.](#)