

## Topic 2:

# Giving Constructive Feedback

*Giving feedback is potentially one of the most important skills you can have as a People Manager. Think of it this way - offering feedback is the same as offering a gift of honesty, communication, and education. It makes employees feel valued.*

### How can I provide effective feedback?

There are many facets to providing effective feedback. Here are some of the most powerful ways to ensure your feedback is received without defensiveness:

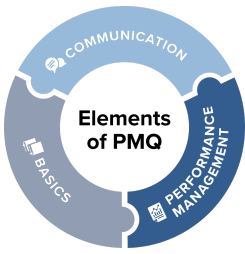
In general	During the feedback conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Build a base—a good working relationship to help ensure your feedback is heard.</li><li>– Provide team-based feedback when appropriate.</li><li>– Keep the conversation private.</li><li>– Ask questions to ensure a two-sided conversation.</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ask permission.</li><li>2. Describe the specific behavior. Focus on the behavior, not the person.</li><li>3. Ask for clarification.</li><li>4. Share the impact.</li><li>5. Ask for understanding.</li><li>6. Confirm commitment.</li></ol>

### What's with all of the questions?

*You noticed!* There are a lot of questions that happen during a feedback conversation. You may even find that although you're the one "giving feedback," the employee is the one doing most of the talking. And that is exactly what you want to happen! Asking questions is powerful because:

1. You're helping the employee find the solutions themselves instead of telling them what to do, which will help them remember the end solution, making them more likely to act on it, and be motivated to complete it.

2. Often the employee comes up with an even better solution than the one you had in your head going into the conversation!



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## Document, document, document!

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Mind like a steel trap? That's what we all think of our memories. But, as humans, we have selective memories and miscommunications and interpret things differently. This is why your HR partner constantly reminds you to document, document, document. Be sure you know and abide by company policies for keeping employee documentation.

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## Ideas for keeping effective documentation

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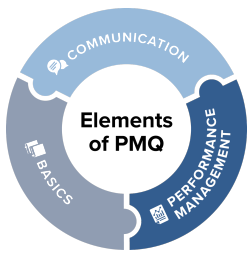
- Create a confidential file folder (physical or on your computer) for each employee and include an incident report document. When an incident happens, note the date, time, person involved and a summary of the discussion in the file.
- Keep an email folder for each employee that includes your conversations and the employee's conversations with others in the organization.
- Document good things that happen, not just negative incidents.
- Check with your HR partner to see if your organization has a documentation policy and software for storing employee documentation.
- Keep a journal and write in it whenever an incident happens.
- Keep the documentation private and secure.

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## What will prevent me from giving meaningful feedback?

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You're human. Just like the rest of us. And we all make mistakes - especially when dealing with other humans. Our "human-ness" can result in biased or unfair feedback. This is called rater bias. People Managers can help reduce bias by evaluating the organization's performance review tools and processes for consistency and fairness, and discussing any concerns with their management. You can also avoid bias by reviewing the performance of your employees, gathering data, and documenting it throughout the review period. Examples of data can include feedback from others and percentage of progress towards goals, to name just a few.



## Common rater biases

*Consider these common rater biases and do your best to avoid them when completing performance evaluations.*



### Halo effect

When an employee is extremely competent in one area and is therefore rated high in all categories.



### Horn effect

When an employee's one weakness results in an overall low rating.



### Recency

When an appraiser gives more weight to recent occurrences and discounts or minimizes the employee's earlier performance during the appraisal period.



### Primacy

When an appraiser gives more weight to the employee's earlier performance and discounts or minimizes recent occurrences.



### Bias

When an appraiser's values, beliefs or prejudices distort ratings, either consciously or unconsciously.



### Strictness

When an appraiser believes that standards are too low and therefore inflates the standards in an effort to make them meaningful in their eyes. They may be reluctant to give high ratings.



### Leniency

When an appraiser does not want to give low scores, so all employees are given high scores.



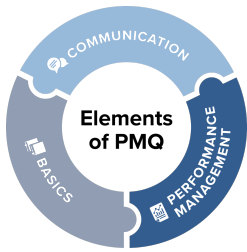
### Central tendency

When an appraiser rates all employees within a narrow range somewhere in the middle of the rating scale, regardless of differences in actual performance.



### Contrast

When an employee's rating is based on how his or her performance compares to that of another employee instead of on objective performance standards.



## How do I prepare for a performance review?

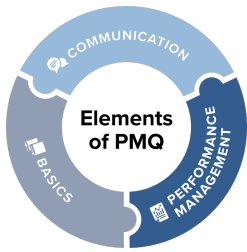
*Even if your company doesn't have a formal annual review process, make sure you initiate regular, timely and honest performance feedback with each of your employees. Whether formal or informal, here are some guidelines you can use as a skeleton performance management plan.*

- Plan for performance by reviewing strategies, goals and objectives of the organization and your team.
- Review job descriptions to ensure all the tasks are being completed efficiently.
- Identify three goals each employee is responsible for during the upcoming performance period.
- Consider the following questions before the review meeting:

- What is the overall message I want to convey, and what are the key things I want the employee to walk away with?
- Does the employee understand the expected level of performance and what will happen if performance standards are not met?
- Do I have all the facts?
- What can I do to better set the employee up for success? Are there resources or training opportunities that the employee needs to be successful?
- Am I ready to hear what the employee has to say; can I handle the feedback?

If you need to discuss performance issues, consider these questions:

- Does the employee understand what the issue is? Is this an ongoing problem or a one-time incident?
- Am I honestly providing this feedback so the employee can clearly understand what the problem is and where he is veering off course?



## Synergistic Teams

One of your top priorities as a People Manager is to ensure that your employees work well together as a team. If you're good at this, you'll have a synergistic team - where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. But, if you have one or two "bad apples" on your team, the synergy will be affected. At some point in your People Manager career, you'll have to have a hard conversation with those "bad apples". To help you prepare for these conversations, remember:

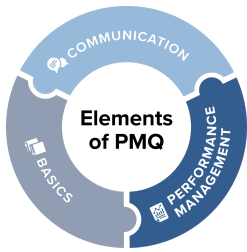
<b>Synergy</b> = <b>Success</b>	<b>Bad apples</b> = <b>Negativity</b>	<b>Negativity</b> = <b>Workplace havoc</b>
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## What is progressive discipline?

*Many companies use a progressive discipline process to help an employee who is underperforming.*

This is the process for dealing with job-related behavior that does not meet organization standards. It includes progression from one stage to the next for repeated violations of the same rule. Here's what a progressive discipline process may look like:

Step 1: Verbal warning	Step 2: Written warning	Step 3: Termination
You, the People Manager, meet with an employee to explain that improvement is needed in the employee's work performance or behavior and discuss appropriate actions to achieve the desired result.	This occurs after a verbal warning has not resolved an employee's performance or behavior. You provide documentation (typically a Performance Improvement Plan, or PIP) during a meeting with the employee, discuss how to resolve the issue and provide potential next steps if the issue is not corrected.	This is the last step of progressive discipline and occurs after verbal and written warnings do not resolve an employee's performance or behavior.



## How do I prepare for and deliver a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)?

- Check with your HR partner to ensure you are clear on the procedures, policies and forms for your company, and with your manager to ensure you are viewing the situation clearly.
- Using the PIP, document the specific performance issue and develop an action plan.
- Plan out what you want to say. Ensure you are gathering solid objective data and not using subjective terms or statements.
- Provide clear and actionable items for the employees to follow.
- Have a plan on how you will document your conversation. Make sure to provide clear and actionable items for employees to follow.
- Have the conversation in person whenever possible, or by video chat if you're managing remote workers.
- Follow up with the employee after the PIP to review progress, and determine whether to close, extend or amend the PIP.

## What can I do to conduct a successful PIP Meeting?



### Set the stage

- Review the organization's expectations and policies related to the issue.
- Describe the performance or behavior that needs to change, describing the conduct, not the individual.



### Be specific

- Avoid making broad judgments.
- Share specific dates to show when/where the behavior occurred.
- Include some positive statements, too, to specify when the employee did things right.



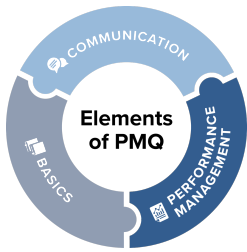
### Explain the impact

- Explain how the employee's behavior impacts others trying to do their jobs.



### Develop a plan

- Introduce the proposed action plan and ask for the employee's input.
- Listen and adjust the plan based on the employee's ideas and make sure you and the employee are committed to it.
- Ask what you can do to help the employee.



## What may prevent me from providing not-so-good feedback?

	Barriers	To avoid this barrier
<b>Relationships</b>	You're afraid that giving feedback will negatively affect your relationship with the employee.	Think of all your high performers who are tired of picking up slack for the low performer. Do it for them.
<b>Time</b>	You don't feel you have the time to plan for, write, discuss and follow up on the feedback.	Consider who has time to continue operating ineffectively because of this employee issue.
<b>Not knowing what to say</b>	Giving feedback is uncomfortable, and you're not sure how to deliver the news.	Plan for the conversation, and practice delivering the feedback with a trusted mentor or peer.