

4 conversations good leaders have with their teams regularly

In the modern workplace, there is no shortage of communication lines between a leader and their team. Whether it's via email, phone, instant messaging or passing conversations, for most, the contact is constant. But how often are you actually sitting down to have a proper conversation?

Those in leadership positions should be meeting with your staff individually on a regular basis. This helps to ensure that there are open lines of communication around morale, performance and where support is needed.

Here are four questions good leaders ask to kick off important conversations with their team members

- **Are you being challenged, recognised and trained enough?**

It's crucial for leaders to check in regularly with their staff, this helps to ensure that conversations with their boss aren't viewed as things that only occur when something is wrong. Career coach [Nicole Grainger-Marsh](#) explains, "If you have high-performers who feel bored, unchallenged and undervalued, it won't be long until they're looking for greener pastures. For this reason, it's essential to be having these kinds of conversations with your staff on a regular basis."

Don't just make meetings about task reviews. "Make sure that you schedule one-to-ones with your team members, and that this time is used not only for the review of tasks and activities, but to openly discuss how they are feeling about their workload, their aspirations, development areas and so on. And of course, it's about providing constructive feedback and recognition so that they're clear on what they're doing well (and should be doing more of), and where they need to be looking at development."

- **What are your strengths, and are you utilising them?**

If you're not already aware of your staff members' strengths, it's important to learn about them, so that you can ensure they're being utilised. That way they'll remain challenged and engaged with their work.

“Again, these sorts of conversations should be had regularly, not just at performance review time,” Grainger-Marsh says. “A great way to support your staff in recognising strengths is to use a technique called ‘feed forward’. When discussing progress on their work, ask them to tell you what is working well and what they think they have done well. Then have a coaching conversation to enable them to identify how they can apply these strengths in new situations.”

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What do you need in order to grow?

You can't expect your staff members to give the job their all if they don't feel like there is any possibility for career development. But if your staff are able to grow in their job and work towards their goals they will be much more likely to give it their all. That's why you should find out how they would like their role to evolve, and how you could assist with this.

“When defining performance goals and KPIs for your staff, it's important that you also work together to define development and career goals,” Grainger-Marsh says. “Spend some time defining what they want to achieve in their career over the next 12 and 24 months. Establish a clear goal and agree to the development areas that they need to focus on to achieve the goal. Beyond this, consider how you and the business could support this, whether it's through job shadowing, on-the-job training, taking on new projects or external training courses.”

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Are there any issues that need addressing?

Whether they're related to work, processes, colleagues, or the individual themselves, any issues should be addressed early at regular check-in meetings. This way you can help stop small problems from becoming bigger ones.

“As a leader, you are certainly busy, but you can't afford not to take the time to do this, Grainger-Marsh explains. “These meetings, even if only once a month, need to have an agenda that includes not only a task review, but time to discuss and openly address any issues. If staff feel this time is carved out for them, it often prevents frustrations building and difficulties arising.”

Be direct: ask your staff what they need from you. “Making sure that you are clear on your staff's needs, as their leader, will mean that you will be able to better motivate, inspire and lead your team to success.”

Having clear lines of communication that are open to your staff via regular meetings ensures that everyone is on the same page, and your workplace will be healthier and happier as a result.