

Holding Necessary Conversations Best Practice Guide

1. Keep it focused. Find five to ten minutes with the employee that will be uninterrupted.
2. Make it private. Your feedback will be better received when others aren't watching.
3. Keep it short. The entire conversation should take less than 10 minutes. Remember that this is about delivering feedback to someone's whose actions are not aligned with the company experience. It is not the time for them to defend or justify their behavior.
4. Get ready. Script the conversation ahead of time using the Necessary Conversations tool. Rehearse your talking points so you aren't reading from the tool during the conversation.
5. Be cool. Deliver your message calmly and objectively. Avoid letting personal emotion influence your body language or tone of voice. If you are angry, wait to have the conversation until you have calmed down.
6. Be timely. Have the conversation within a couple of days of witnessing the event.
7. Examine your motives. Will it benefit the team/customers? Great. Just make *you* feel better? Stop.
8. Keep it casual. Instead of scheduling a meeting, ask the employee for five minutes of their time. Start with something such as:
 - "There is something that has been bothering me and I want to be able to talk it through. Is now a good time?" Or, "Can I talk with you about a recent conversation we had?"
 - If the employee says no, ask, "Do you mind if I ask another time?"
 - If the employee says no to that, fine, they probably already got the message.
9. Give the employee the benefit of the doubt. Add a statement such as one of the following:
 - "I appreciate that you are overwhelmed [Or: you have a lot going on], and I don't know if you are aware of how you have been coming across. Can we talk about what I've [seen/heard] and my concerns about the impact it might be having on you and others?"
 - "There is a lot that we are doing really well, but we want to take our team to the next level in being more [efficient/effective]. Based on that, there is something I'd like to address with you."
 - "I don't think you meant to come across this way, and I wanted you to be aware of how you are being perceived."
10. Regularly recognize great work so the relationship is already in place to make coaching more natural.
11. Think of the conversation as about coaching, rather than correction.
12. Schedule regular one-on-ones with your team to allow you opportunities for coaching before trends have escalated.